

OH 523 Her Helm panel: March 12, 2024

Gerrie Isabell-McCottry, Kate Dumhart, Sarah Lawrence, Kate Hollingsworth

Moderator: Jen Dolde

JENIFER DOLDE: [00:00:01] So we know that women were here on the bay. We know they contributed. Regardless of whether their role was traditional, whether they broke down barriers and challenged norms or whether they quietly charted their own course. And the question is whether any details of their lives and their experiences still exist. And this is true for so many underrepresented groups in our history. We might have a photograph. Of the wife who accompanied her husband aboard his cargo schooner or the entrepreneur who ran her own business on Smith Island. We have oral histories with the young experience seekers who helped to build Jim Richardson's Maryland Dove, and interviews with Lila Line's *Waterwomen* for a book in the 1980s. But we don't have many extensive oral histories with these women, especially ones that focus on their journey, their challenges, and the reflections on their successes. And so Kristin Rutkowski's book and photography project *Her Helm* gave us the opportunity to collaborate and to capture the voices of some of these women featured and in the exhibition that you see in this space. The companion oral history project as Alyssa

[Zajan] mentioned supported by the Upper Shore Regional Folklife Center through the Maryland State Arts Council was conducted by our friend and a log canoe sailor, Jennifer Shea, who spent hours interviewing these women, and thoroughly enjoyed it. I wish she was here tonight to convey her enthusiasm for her for her participation in this project. These women who navigate the Bay's waters with expertise and passion. Kristin's photographic journey celebrating them will stand as a testimony to their lives and their contributions and will dispel those continuing stereotypes about just who is in command aboard vessels on the Chesapeake. But tonight, I want to give as much time as possible to these amazing women and I'm delighted to briefly introduce the panelists.

JENIFER DOLDE: [00:01:54] We have, Kate Hollingsworth, "Boomies", who is a 200, yes, a 200-ton US Coast Guard licensed captain who has captained luxury sailing yachts and classic wooden cabin cruisers and now teaches about sailing. Sarah Lawrence. Yes, thank you. A 100-ton US Coast Guard licensed captain and boating instructor. She helps run her family marine towing and salvage business and operates the Chesapeake Boating Academy. Gerrie McCottry. Is a powerboat skipper. With a knack for mechanics and a prominent member of the Seafarers Yacht Club, which is one of the oldest historically black yacht clubs

in the country. Kate Dumhart is a 100-ton US Coast Guard licensed captain and environmental educator who has worked as a mate and captain on the skipjack *Dee of St. Mary's* and now is captain, a captain of the schooner *Sultana* in Chestertown. I thank each of you for being here this evening. So this is going to really be an informal conversation. I'm delighted, we've upgraded our audio. Each of you have your own microphones, so no awkward passing back and forth.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Amazing. Ooh that worked.

JENIFER DOLDE: So you like that. I encourage you as much to talk to each other as to respond to me directly. And we'll have some time for a few questions at the end as well. Okay, so...and we are going to let this progress as naturally and organically as possible. So, this is just a guideline. So, we might expect. That every single one of you has been on boats and on the waters since you were a young age, but that is not universally true. I'm interested in your earliest introduction to boating, how you learned to handle boats. For instance, Gerrie, I know you grew up on a farm, not at all near the water. And I think that some of your first experiences were at Columbia Beach and Shady Side with your husband's family. Maybe you could start us out and

tell us what you remember about that beach and your first boating experiences.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: [00:04:05] Absolutely. As you say, I was born in the country. So there was no water around. When I moved to the city, I met this young man sitting right here on the second row, who had a love for the water, and his family had a beach home in Columbia Beach. And when we were in college, he said he wanted to be on the water. So we went to Sears and Roebuck, if those of you who remember Sears and Roebuck. And bought a 13- or 14-foot flat bottom boat. And we used to carry it down to the Bay on our heads. And that's how I got in the water. And from there, because his love was so passionate, and I was so passionately in love with him, I said, "I'm gonna keep him happy." So I wanted to learn all about boating. We went from the 13-foot boat to an old wooden boat to a wooden bayliner and an Owens and something else I don't even remember. But as we progressed, I wanted to be able to handle whatever we had. And so he was always very encouraging...always saying, yes, you can do this. This...I'm not going to stand in your way. And so now we own a 40-foot, Carver, half cabin. And still he has been just wonderful. And encouraging me to be able to handle the boat as well as he does.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:05:28] That's absolutely lovely. Thank you. Ahoy, I am Kate, Captain Boomies, you should call me Boomies because there's a much more impressive Kate over here. And I absolutely grew up sailing.

My father had me on boats in one of those baby carriers that he strapped to the front of him. And he would go out sailing with me and be hauling lines while I drooled on him and it worked out really well for me because as I grew up, I had the best summer job of anybody because I went from sailing camp to sailing camp counselor to teaching sailing in the summers in college to, hey, here's this big yacht that's in my way every day and they're paying me way too much money to go take it down to Florida. So that is how I progressed into becoming a professional captain. I did end up running some bigger boats. And now I'm semi-retired and just yell about it on the internet. Which is fantastic, by the way. I highly recommend, go follow me, Captain Boomies.

[Laughter] Okay, I'm sorry, Kate.

KATE DUMHART: [00:06:41] My story is much more similar to Gerrie's. I also did not grow up sailing or on the water. My dad's family were tobacco farmers in southern Maryland, which I think is culturally as far away as you can get from sailing if not geographically. But we went to the beach once a summer as a kid, often to Chincoteague, and my parents will tell you that I

could not be convinced that the horizon was a place you couldn't go to. I apparently repeatedly said, I want to go there and just kept pointing to as far as I could see and as a three-year-old could... I could not understand that that wasn't attainable. And then to make a long story short, my background is actually in biology. I went to Salisbury, go seagulls. I taught Outdoor Ed for a long time and ended up back in Maryland. At a place that had just bought a skipjack and they said, "you know, if you learn how to sail this thing. You could teach on the boat." And I had some powerboat experience from some other jobs in the Florida Keys and Washington State. And then I learned to sail and I never went back inside, nor do I work there anymore. I left. Now I sail every day.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Love it.

SARAH LAWRENCE: [00:07:58] Good evening. My name is Sarah. First, I wanna say thank you to Kristen for putting this together and highlighting all these women. I feel like super proud to be up here with so much talent. Every time I talk to people, I get more and more inspired by what they're doing. So, thank you, Kristen, for facilitating this. I grew up as a cruising kid, I would say, on a sailboat. So kind of cruising between the Intercoastal Highway between the Chesapeake and down

in the Bahamas. We had a 34-foot Naiad. Settled down in Neavitt, which is right down the street here. My parents opened a marine towing and salvage company in '89. Tow Jamm Marine. You're in a jam, need a tow, call Tow Jamm. Partnered with BoatUS, also known as TowboatUS. So grew up working in the marine towing and salvage industry, got into sailing kind of sailed the whole circuit in the area. Ended up going to St. Mary's College of Maryland, sailing on the dinghy team, graduated. And decided to buy a sailboat down in St. Martin and live in the Bahamas for eight or nine years. Down there was captaining boats, doing deliveries, running a sailing school and a powerboat school. So I like lived my life in reverse, like all the fun stuff. Like I lived with retirement, like every day we were spear fishing and now I'm up here driving a minivan so. But it's really cool so...kind of just was always around me. Don't really remember the first minute, but it's been part of the family for a while and I've got my daughter Vera here so it's been exciting to get to bring her out on the water and I have a son who's at home and getting to share that I think is one of the best parts of being on the water.

JENIFER DOLDE: [00:09:45] Thank you all so much. So as you've already indicated, several of you have taught, or do teach sailing or boating skills both formally and informally. And as I

read every page of your transcripts, it was like 300...400 pages, which I enjoyed thoroughly. I wondered if you think...any of you think there's something about being a woman that lends itself to that role or skill as a teacher. Or, something about how you learned to sail or handle boats that led you down a path where you find yourself sharing that with, with others. And we can take this in any order.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: [00:10:26] I like to say that I do find it very, very comforting and encouraging to see a woman behind the wheel. And as an example to my daughters and my grandchildren, I wanted them to know that they can get behind the wheel and do whatever grandma does. So as we have driven all across the Bay, even as little as I think two years old, our granddaughter would sit in my lap. Or sit in my husband's lap. She couldn't see over the steering wheel. But she would just be driving. She would be driving as she got older. We let her start reading the charts. So that now she is. She's 12 next week. She can operate the boat extremely well. My grandson can operate the boat extremely well. So I, I think as a mother. And as a grandmother, we set a great example for our kids and they tell other kids, well, you know, grandma drives a boat, and I can drive it too. So it kinda opens up all generations for what we as women can actually do.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:11:38] Okay. Sorry, that was amazing and I'm really jealous of your answer because it was so articulate and wonderful. And I'm going to say something stranger, which is I...teaching when I was younger was an accident. It was just, "oh, this is a cooler summer job than anybody else is going to have. So I'm going to do that." But as I... in my semi-retirement, I do coaching now, mostly docking coaching.

JENIFER DOLDE: And what's that? And what's that course called?

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Oh, Docking Without Divorcing is my signature class. And so because it is a... it is a team sport. It is a spectator sport. But I... So I do a lot of coaching and I...I didn't realize it until just this moment, but being a woman did give me a perspective on the coaching aspect that I...I don't think a lot of men in my position have, which is I am a softer touch. When it comes to teaching you something that you feel like should come naturally and easy to you because you've been driving big cars, big mini vans all your life. So you feel like you should be good at this and there's... The reality is it's just a completely different monster and you have to learn from zero. And...and you need somebody to be softer about that. Right. To...to help you acknowledge how different it

is. And then...and then bring you around to the actual technique. And I think that that has probably been the edge that I've had and I just didn't realize it until this moment. So thank you.

KATE DUMHART: [00:13:40] I have a little bit of a hot take.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I'm listening.

KATE DUMHART: I don't think at least for my experience that being a woman makes me a better teacher, but I am a more patient teacher as a woman, because I've had so much practice not losing my patience when men were teaching me things.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: That's fine.

KATE DUMHART: Because if I got frustrated every time somebody was disrespectful or took a line out of my hand or said, "You're not ready for that," I would have never been allowed back on the boat. And so I feel like I have a boundless patience for talking to people, understanding where they're coming from, meeting where...with them where they are and then getting them to a place where we can work together.

KATE HOLLINGSWOTH: Yeah

KATE DUMHART: So it does have to do with being a woman, but it's not. It's not built in. [Laughter]

SARAH LAWRENCE: [00:14:39] So I've got a boating school and I often I teach up to four students at a time. So it's really interesting because I'll get usually four different learning styles on the boat, people that have either been boating their whole lives or maybe it's their first time. So getting to shift between different ways to connect with them has been really good. A lot of people would get really nervous and I like to remind them that one thing you never want to forget to bring aboard the boat besides lifejackets and all that good stuff, is having fun. So that's why we're all in the water. So all ultimately it's okay if we make mistakes, that's how we're going to learn and I think being a woman, you become a little bit more relatable if you've got women in your class, sometimes got to break down the barrier a little bit with men, but I'd say overall men have been very receiving of lessons and... and...and feedback. But I think just letting people know that it's okay to make mistakes. None of us are perfect boaters, you know. What we can do is we can give you our recipe and our skills and then you can practice it and transfer it onto your boat. But that messing

up is okay, and then we're going to keep trying it and ultimately, we're here to have a good time.

JENIFER DOLDE: [00:15:52] No, and I fully respect, I was going to say, Kate, I fully respect that, that you know, stereotype that women are better teachers is not always the case so I'm glad...I'm glad you challenged that and I mean... I think as an educator you first and foremost you know it's very different to teach kids about environment...the environment and then to teach your young crew members how to sail so it's almost two...two different tasks. You were going to say something else.

KATE DUMHART: I actually was just gonna say about making mistakes is what I always...I've been saying it a lot this week because the crew are putting the boat together, is I never make the same mistake twice, but I do like to make each one once to make sure the lesson sticks. It's an encouraging idiom that I use a lot when the crew are learning new things and making a mistake.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I've made so many mistakes.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: I think we all have at some point.

[Laughter]

KATE DUMHART: You have to make them all once. So the lesson sticks.

JENIFER DOLDE: [00:16:46] Does anyone want to share their story of how they decided to become an official, you know, US Coast Guard captain, how that decision came up and why you decided to take that particular step in your career, whether necessary or not. Or why you didn't in the case... you've talked about why you did not, yes. [Addressing Gerrie]

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: Yeah, I am not an official captain, but if you captain the boat across the Bay, you're a captain.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I agree.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: Yeah, yeah. And I just, I guess I just haven't taken or have the time to do it. I worked for 40 years in the District of Columbia government. I've been retired 17 years. Yay!

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Congratulations.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: [00:17:27.027] Monday's have a whole new meaning. But, you know, I just never took the time to do it, but that has not inhibited me from enjoying and just learning all the challenges that go along with captaining a boat.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Oh man, why I'm gonna, okay, my husband's sitting there so he knows the truth. So I'm gonna tell you the truth. Which is...As somebody who started as a deckhand. A deck hand's job is very physically difficult and not great for me. So I knew that I had to work my way up to captain. I had to be the best at navigation. I had to be the best at planning. I had to be the best at getting visas for the rest of the crew, so that I could step up into the captain position. I had my license very early on. Just because it's an insurance requirement and...and but becoming captain was out of physical necessity because I couldn't continue to do the manual labor anymore. [Laughter]

KATE DUMHART: I was just [winding?] lines today. As a...as a guest star, I did it for, you know, 10 minutes, and then I let the crew put everything else away. I got my license because it was, I don't know how many of you are familiar with skipjacks, they don't take a lot of crew.

So, in order to learn anything else and work my way up after about a season I needed a license to keep working my way up and

learning because there's just the captain and the mate on the boat that I was working on.

But it so happened that they do a small number of trips a year, and you need so many days to get your license so I went and worked on *Sultana* because they sail every day. And then I got my license, but I never left.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: That is really crazy. How many people do you get that are just trying to get their hours on *Sultana*?

KATE DUMHART: [00:19:27] So far I'm the only one. Everybody else takes a very traditional route where they love sailing and love being a schooner bum and want to work on a very complicated, very small boat. [Laughter]

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Okay. [Laughter]

SARAH LAWRENCE: So I was teaching junior sailing in The Abacos and for my work permit to come through I had to get out of the country, I'd been there too long. So kind of flew over to Florida where my dad was on...he had a 41-foot Morgan and he was waiting for a window, a weather window to get across to The Abacos. So I stayed on the boat with him and the weather was closed out. He had let his license lapse. And he was going to

Chapman's to do his and I kind of thought that was a cool idea. So we did that together. And I'm glad I did because he passed away a year or two later. So it kind of just happened by accident and...been at it ever since.

JENIFER DOLDE: [00:20:20] So what's it like to be in charge? What's your approach to leadership? In any capacity, when you're at the helm.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: Well, I'm normally very calm and very direct. Because I think you have to eliminate excitement that takes energy away from your skill. So I just try to always assess the situation. I do listen to my husband a lot because he's an extremely good captain. And so we just keep it calm. I mean, we've been at some situations where you could get very afraid. We've had guests on board who, as a matter of fact, we learned this weekend...We ran into a storm. And one of the...one of the people who was with us said, you know, "I never got afraid because you all were calm. You knew what you were doing, and you got us to safety." So you know you can you can exude what you want your passengers to feel if you get excited they're gonna get excited. If you start screaming, they're going to

start screaming. But if you remain calm, you give them a sense of comfort and we have always done that.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:21:35} Okay, I love... [Laughter] Type of captain that I am, I'm a little ridiculous in case you didn't know and one of the things that I tell my crew when I first meet them. Is that... is something that I learned from my father and that is I only yell under two circumstances: during an emergency, and a simulated emergency. Because I...and what that really means is... the reality is as a leader, as somebody who is responsible for the vessel as somebody who is going to get in trouble with the insurance company when we screw up, I want them to know that I don't have all the answers, that I am open to their input.

That this is still teamwork, but I'm gonna take the full brunt of it. So I think my leadership style is one of absolute. I will take all of the...I need to say bad words. Am I allowed to use...? I will take all of the poo. That comes down. Especially if you...if we all gave everything but I will take it. I will not blame anybody else. It has to stop with me. And that's really as far as it goes.

KATE DUMHART: [00:23:07] I think as...as a woman and someone who has a fairly like higher pitched voice. I had been told on

previous boats that you know, you have to stop screaming at the crew.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: No! [Laughs]

KATE DUMHART: It's true. Someone even suggested that I just get a whistle and make a list of commands like a traditional [unclear] and I said how about we all learn as a crew what it sounds like when a woman raises her voice because if I'm not cursing I'm not angry but my voice is louder because I need you 60 feet away from me to hear what I want.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Dang, okay. I...as somebody who has a lower pitched voice and got made fun of for it. That's so interesting and I, I'm so sorry. That sucks. And ew.

KATE DUMHART: So now I, having learned my lesson, I start the season by telling the crew if I'm not cursing I'm not mad but if I'm raising my voice, it's because I need you to hear me and do it. And if I'm raising my voice more, it's because I need you to do it faster. [Laughter] But to answer the part of the question of what is it, what was it like to be a leader or something like that? As sort of a newer captain. This is my third season

driving *Sultana*. Nobody told me that it's so mentally exhausting. And being a deckhand is physically exhausting. Nobody tells you how tired you are when your brain just does all the thinking all day. You shouldn't be tired and yet. I am.

SARAH LAWRENCE: [00:24:48] I agree with the mental fatigue, especially, yeah, I'm with you. I'm kind of for the loud clear communication. So expectations are set at the dock. What everybody can expect when we're going out, what the weather's going to be, where all the safety gear is, and what roles we're going to play. So, you know, I like to use verbal commands, nice clear short verbal commands instead of, you know, grabbing the helm or grabbing the throttle from somebody. And ultimately I think that when you're...you have to teach people how to respect you and how to listen to you so you kind of command that in how you hold yourself. And that is established pretty much on the dock, and will carry through on the water. So try not to get overly loud, but when you're out and you're, you know, you're up on a plane or it's your...the boat's really like much bigger than my little boats that I'm on I will often lose my voice in the summertime because I'm constantly talking or getting really raspy. So yeah...clear, loud, expected...expectations.

KATE DUMHART: [00:25:46] A like, a personal rule that I have for myself is when I'm giving a command especially when like things need to happen quickly is I like I have set for myself sort of three tiers of priority and like tier one is I'm never going to ever have a personal insult or a curse word be part of the...what is happening like "oh you're so stupid" I would never say that. Thing number two is that I'm always going to give a positive instruction. It's not "don't do that", it's "do this instead". Right? I'm not saying what not to do, because if I tell you what not to do, then anything that isn't that is a choice. But if I tell you what to do, you have one choice. And then the third thing is that I'm going to do it like, in a normal tone of voice. And, and we always hit number one and most of the time we hit number two and sometimes we just don't hit number three.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:26:43] I'm realizing how totally spoiled I am because I, so coming from larger private yachts, we always had the headsets. That's been a thing forever. And I mean, the creepy ones that are the the twirly thing that comes out of your ear and you look like you're in the CIA. So I was able to talk to my crew like. All right, "let's send line number one." Yeah, and that's...that's my giving instructions and any...any other time was, you know, gentle ribbing if you're not working hard

enough. I'm going to make fun of you. Or, if... I will totally make people feel bad for me. If they're screwing up, "like guys the insurance company is gonna come down on me you're never gonna feel this how could you do this to me?" And I'm realizing what a...what a terrible leader for that reason, and it makes me think of one other time that I was an absolute terrible captain. And it was on a delivery with my husband and it was just the two of us and I made a bad call in terms of whether we should go whether we should try to hold our course here or tack up and try to avoid some weather. And I made the wrong call. I 100 percent made the wrong call. It cost us another like 12 hours on our passage. He was real mad at me. And I had to sit in that decision. And...and feel terrible but...but again it's just you take on "I am captain my decision is the final decision when I say something we're gonna do it" and, and I have to have it that way because I will take full responsibility for it when all is said and done. And I learned that though from the captains that I worked for. I didn't, I didn't invent that style. I learned that from the captains that I worked for. So, but I like your strategy. I'm going to steal that.

JENIFER DOLDE: [00:29:02] Yes, so a couple interesting things I heard there. So we think a lot about, I think, the physical skills, you know, Gerrie, I know you're a fond of mechanics,

mechanical things. So we could talk a little bit about that but also really taking Kate about this idea of the mental challenge and being exhausted at the end of the day and doing primarily, you know, mental work. So. Any part of that if anybody wants to weigh in.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: [00:29:27] Okay, from a mechanical perspective, you know, as a kid, I never wanted to play with dolls. When I was little, I was learning how to shift gears in a car. I am a car fanatic. But on the boat, in order to maintain it, anybody who has any size boat, any kind of boat, maintenance is a priority. And my husband is a good mechanic and everything that he does. I'm always there to assist. And that's how I learn. So when he's not with me. And we are somewhere. There are things that are on the boat that I know about. There are things that I know I could help do. So, and I'm trying to pass that on to my grandkids as well. Because if you have something, you need to know how to take care of it. If something comes up, you need to know who to call or what to do. So I'm, I'm very into mechanics. I really wanted to be an aeronautical engineer.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Whoa.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: But back in the day we weren't encouraged to do that. But now in this life. In this very, very blessed life. Boating has taken the place of that.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:30:33] What's...what's the most impressive fix you've pulled off?

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: I think changing fuel filters is...

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Under way?

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: Oh, no, not underway. Oh, no, no, no, no, we're not suicidal. [Laughter] Yeah, but that almost anything else that he does. It doesn't matter what it is. I want to know how it works. Why does it work this way? What do we need to do? What do I need to order? What parts do we need? You know. When he says, "hand me this," I know exactly what tool he needs. So his knuckles get busted, not mine. I have to keep my nails good. [Laughter] Anyway, but just knowing is...is good.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:31:09] I respect that.

KATE DUMHART: I definitely also strive to be the most excellent tool passer because if I know where all the tools are and I know which one you want, then I get to be the person watching you do it so that if the person I'm watching isn't around, I have seen it done once before and I know which tools you need, we can certainly figure it out.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:31:29] You got one? Okay. I have a, I have a phone call that I make and thank God for technology because my husband just tells me to put the boat on the phone. Like "baby, it's making this weird noise" and this, like, no, I'll just turn the video thing on and put the boat on the phone. But the reason I'm even able to do that is because I had so many. Captains, engineers, people above me that did have me pass them the tools and when it came time for me to make the fix. "Yeah, I'll do it. I don't like to, but I will."

SARAH LAWRENCE: Yeah. Yeah, so lived aboard for a while and you just kind of have to figure it out because oftentimes you're somewhere that maybe there's not a mechanic. So I'm really good at asking for advice or getting other people to come help me and show me things. I was crossing with a woman that's...crazy French lady on her big [Uchimara?] catamaran from Florida and we were coming into the Bahamas and threw the fan belt off the port

engine and we didn't have an extra. So always have extras of those. But we did have a lot of duct tape, so I basically just braided one out of duct tape.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: No way.

SARAH LAWRENCE: [00:32:49] And I put it on and it worked like the last 30 miles to get us into West End so we could clear. So just being innovative, but the mental fatigue is real because yeah, everything kind of comes back down on you. But I also think business wise...so my mom is here, and she is, you know, the head dispatcher, we always joke that when people call us, we're kind of like therapists. So you get to hear the whole story, how they got the boat, how their family goes on the boat, their dog's name. I'm experiencing that as well with my boating school. People call up, they want to ask questions. So I often spend like, 45 min to an hour [laughs] with people kind of hearing what they've done what they're looking to do. So when you're bringing your A game to so many different aspects of it, I think it's important to know how to schedule yourself and when to say no and when to know when it's too much. Because we've got kids and businesses and families. So knowing when you're putting too much out and when it's time to maybe like cut back on courses or do this or that or ask for help from other areas.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:33:59] I am so embarrassed because I have absolutely called BoatUS and told them everything.

[Laughter] I have one hundred percent been like "and then I don't know what happened, but like I should have had lunch today. This seems like a mistake,".

SARAH LAWRENCE: [Addressing her mother] Do you remember talking to Boomies?

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I'm sure I've called you before. I get to play with a lot of boats that are not in the best shape.

JENIFER DOLDE: All right, I'm comfortable asking this question because you all are a really confident leaders and captains, but I know that most if not all of you had this experience. Can you tell some stories of how other people have treated you when you see, when they see that you as a woman or the captain of a boat.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: [00:34:48] My husband tells a story that we were, I can't remember which...which port we were in. It might have been Herrington Harbor. And I was docking the boat and what I didn't realize was that there were women who were a dock over. And after I docked there was all this cheering. I'm

like, wow, this is...this is good. At least I didn't take the dock down. But, one of his friends said, you know, you know, oh, he wasn't a friend. [Laughs] A former friend asked him, "why did he let his wife drive the boat?" You know? And I believe his answer was, well, if something happened to him. What would we do? And I had always thought that if he couldn't handle the boat, I want to be sure that I can get us to safety wherever we are. And so some people really want to stereotype women into being just first mates. And for some that's okay. But for some of us, it is not. When he was riding his motorcycle, he had a Harley that I would ride on the back. And I'm like, well, I want to be upfront. So I ended up getting a Harley. For a short period. It's... there's nothing we can't do. But, you know, it's an inspiration to all the women when they see us at the helm. And as I say, he's always been so supportive. So if we can encourage other women not just to do boating but to do anything you really want. You know, that's a good thing.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:36:38] I personally...I am always on a mission to embarrass men when they are behind the helm and their wife is making the flying leap to the dock and wrestling with pilings and dock lines. Like that's...that's the manly job. Like what are you doing? Like. Putting it in gear and taking it out of gear, like that's this [gestures changing gears]. Like, come

on. So as far as being the captain. I mean, yeah, you're gonna deal with the comments on the dock. You're gonna deal with people being especially odd, even though I've got 20 years of professional boating experience. And I think though that men are experiencing the same stress, it's just coming at a different...in a different way where everyone's, you know, expecting them to succeed. They're expecting me to fail and then I succeed. They're expecting men to succeed and if they fail it's like way worse. It's so much worse. To have your expectations dashed. And I think that's a much harder position to come from. But yeah.

KATE DUMHART: [00:37:55] I'm gonna tell one very specific story. Which Kate, I think you've already heard. But I'm gonna tell it again because it's really....

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Do it.

KATE DUMHART: So one day maybe two years ago I was driving *Sultana* and it was kind of a gross day. And the wind was...if you've ever been to Chestertown, the wind was coming kind of just up the river and so we got off the dock and I just put the hammer down to go down to the corner where I was going to turn and then go sailing, which was going to be lovely. And that's

like a 10-minute motor. And so I figured we'd just put the mainsail up on the way. We were motoring into the wind, save some time, turn the corner, go sailing. It was going to be great. And as we got the sail up and I'm still motoring waiting to make my turn, I just needed two or three more minutes. This gentleman walks back to the helm and he says...

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I remember [Laughs].

KATE DUMHART: [00:38:49] "Excuse me. I'm not sure if you're aware. But it's actually illegal to drive the boat with the sail and the engine at the same time." [Laughter] Which really...like it's the...I'm not sure if you're aware you are the person who is responsible for my life right now driving the boat but I'm not sure if you aware...you are aware of what I assume is a very basic...So I said. "Yes, it is". And he said. "No, no it isn't". And I very politely explained that what I can't do as a boat operating my engine while my sail is up, is claim rights as a sailboat if I was in a passing situation with another boat I would be a powerboat. Now this is September on the Chester River on a Saturday where it's raining. I'm blowing 15 knots. There is not another person for probably 25 miles. But I very...in a crossing situation, yes, I would be a powerboat, but I can have both things up at the same time. We do it really often, takes

part... I just word vomited. I just over explained anything I could possibly think of so that he knew that I had some frame of reference to answer not his question, but his statement. And then to finish our conversation, he said really in dignity...indignantly. "That is not what they teach at the New Jersey boater safety course".

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:40:25] Listen, I'm from Jersey.

KATE DUMHART: Is that what they teach?

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Absolutely not. So I'd forgotten about this story and I'm so glad you reminded me of it, because the question I've been meaning to ask you is what did the crew think? Did they hear this?

KATE DUMHART: [00:40:40] That's...that's an excellent question. So two things happened immediately after he made this very profound and incorrect statement is that I had decided that I was going to end that conversation and so I gave the secret hand signal to the education coordinator to give a talk about the boat and I said, "hey Darwin, do that thing you do" and they gathered everyone on the main deck and started talking and so this gentleman had to go hear about the boat which is great and

then the mate leaned over to me and said, "You handled that so much better than I would have". I was like, "well, Rudy, that's why I'm the captain." Cause I...cause I know how to politely answer people who think that they could...and what I didn't say, but I've always wanted to is, "oh, sir, would you like to take command then?"

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:41:25] Well, is...is everybody here, does... is anybody here not a sailor? Like knows nothing about sailboats? [Someone raises their hand] Oh, okay. Hey, look at that. Okay, so let me put this story in a little bit of context for you and that is...she's a big girl, right? How long is that boat?

KATE DUMHART: Sultana is...very specially...it's 54 feet on deck, but 97 feet overall.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: She's a big girl!

KATE DUMHART: The head of it goes on forever. [Laughter]

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: She's a big girl. And that's 97 feet of boat that she has to worry about, and you have to put it into a

position that you can actually put the sails up in the first place.

KATE DUMHART: [00:41:58] And the Chester River is very skinny. There's a limited number of positions that you can do that.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: So you absolutely have to put the motor on and maneuver yourself into position before you can start setting those sails up, because otherwise you're just asking for trouble.

KATE DUMHART: And remember that the topsails are square, so I really got to be off the wind to actually go sailing. So yeah, I put the four and a half sails up while I'm motoring down to the spot where I can turn, put the wind on the beam and then put those big squares up.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:42:32] Ridiculous.

KATE DUMHART: It was a brilliant plan and I executed it flawlessly. Much to my passenger's dismay. [Laughter]

SARAH LAWRENCE: [00:42:40] I'm also gonna share a specific story. So I think overall I would say pretty...I feel pretty

welcomed as a female captain in the industry. But there's always the exception. So, you know, last year I had...I do these like intro to boating, docking, open water, and advanced open water and I often get me and a group of four men. So we were out, it was a docking course. And there was just one guy and he was just kind of grumbling and making these really passive-aggressive comments every time I would, you know, demonstrate the maneuver that everybody was going to kind of practice. To the point where I was like, "if...if you would like to share anything, like, please speak up if you think it should be done differently, I would love to hear your take on this." And the entire time...to the point where I kind of had to put him in a position where he realized, he wasn't the captain of the boat.

We get back to the dock at the end. And everybody goes and he stays. He kind of confessed to me that he just felt so insecure and like, insignificant on the water that he had this massive, like, 40-foot center console, and he had never taken it out, so he takes his boat around the bay on a jet ski...or his wife around the bay on a jet ski because he's scared to run his big boat. So I think sometimes maybe it's just insecurities if people are, you know, looking at you, but I thought that was a good point that they expect men to succeed. They expect women to fail. So yeah, like it's cool when you pull a boat into the dock and everyone's clapping but it's like they don't really clap for

men because they're, you know, really not that big of a deal.
Yeah.

[Talking indistinctly]

JENIFER DOLDE: [00:44:17] So I think most of you have sailed or boated in many, many different places, but what do you like most? What's special about being on the Chesapeake? What makes it unique or challenging or satisfying? What's that experience like for you?

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: There are so many wonderful places you can visit on the Chesapeake. And you...you never really have to even leave the Bay to find a lot of wonderful little places that are tucked away. Many I've never even visited by car. As a matter of fact, coming here to St. Michael's, I've only been to St. Michael's, probably two or three times by car. Every time it's by boat. And I just think that the Bay has a lot, a lot to offer. Even though it's not like going all the way down to the islands, you meet every single challenge on the Bay. Be it from the weather, be it from non-boaters who are boating [laughs] who really shouldn't be. But it's...its to me, it's just a wonderful venue just being on the...on the Bay.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:45:24] So I have gotten to sail literally all over the world and I'm from Jersey as we established earlier. But I fell madly in love with the Chesapeake Bay. I think that if this was blue-green Caribbean colored water, nobody would boat anywhere else in the world. Like they just wouldn't. And secretly, I'm glad of that because it keeps the waterways, you know, calmer I think. There's so many fantastic little nooks and crannies. The bounty that gets pulled out of the Bay and we get to eat that is so good. God, I love crabs. The just...everybody here...the cult of Maryland is really impressive people really understand what's powerful about this waterway as soon as they get to it. And it's sort of my favorite secret. In terms of captains that I know all around the world, they skip the Chesapeake Bay. They have no idea until the one time they have to put in because they're avoiding some weather and they're going to go up the C&D [Chesapeake and Delaware Canal] to get to New York. And then they all figure it out and they go, why didn't you tell me? [Laughs] And, and it's just magical. Absolutely.

KATE DUMHART: [00:46:50] Yeah, I totally agree. I have not traveled as widely by water, but that opinion of the Chesapeake Bay is...In what I do, I take kids out on the water and we move the boat around the Bay to make a shorter bus ride for students

throughout the school year. So a lot of times, I've got *Sultana* in Cambridge and I get to take out kids who could have walked to the boat in under half an hour if they wanted to who've never been on the water before. And so something that they don't have access to but is so magical you get to give them access to and like just open the doors to all of that magic. Every time we set sails on *Sultana*, assuming that the trip is long enough. Part of the program is the moment of silence. So the sails are set, the engine is off. And then we just let the kids appreciate it.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I didn't know you did that.

KATE DUMHART: Yeah. Well, you should come for a sail.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I should.

SARAH LAWRENCE: [00:47:48] Echoing what everybody's kind of already said, but all of the nooks and crannies, I think that no matter the wind direction, there's usually a place that you can find that's in the lead that you can still get out on the water. In the summertime I love to take the kids by boat down to St. Michael's. I do music in the park. All of these super cute historic towns that you can kind of bop around, you know,

they're each like 30, 45 minutes from each other. And then go for lunch and explore, bring family. It's just...it's, it's a great spot.

JENIFER DOLDE: [00:48:23] Sarah, you see people at some of their worst times on the Bay though. I mean, you really do and you tell some stories about that so have you seen...that doesn't change your love of the Bay. Has that changed people's...you know if they have a bad experience "I'm never going out again, the storms...the, you know...".

SARAH LAWRENCE: One thing...so we actually have our spring captains meeting coming up. And one thing that we always tell them is. You know, you can change a person's day just by your attitude, your character and your demeanor, so they may be having the worst day ever and you can actually turn it around for them. It's not great when your boat fails, or you go aground, or you need a battery jump or fuel drop or something like that. But...you can turn that around, you can get them back safely to port you can tell them "Guys, you know, open a bottle of wine. We're under control like sit back, relax, have fun, we're going to get you here, enjoy the sunset." So yeah, so sometimes we see people and you know it's not the best day but we try to always turn it around and we have a great team that we

work with so that if, you know, if a boat is sinking, actively sinking and we're on scene with pumps on it. We've got people in the background calling the, you know, the boat yard. They're gonna put the slings down. Even if it's, you know, nighttime. So just having the whole network in the Bay, kind of makes it more smooth.

KATE HOLLINGSORTH: [00:49:44] Can I tell you a story about BoatUS?

JENIFER DOLDE: Sure.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: So my...we were supposed to be going to Rock Hall Day. And we were leaving from Middle River going to Rock Hall and all of a sudden there's a smell and it's not the right kind of smell and it's probably oil burning in a place that oil shouldn't be burning. So we shut down, full shutdown, open up the engine head, sure enough, we're...we're spraying oil. And that is...that boat is done. And I'm so excited because I did just happen to have the new app on my phone at the time and I just busted it out and I put in my coordinates and...and BoatUS calls me and they're like, "are you okay? Is everybody OK?" I'm like, "yes, I'm a little low on ice though, but I'll be...I'll be all right. Please come get me." And it really was...it...it

turned a day that was...it was such a roller coaster of a day of like you start really high of like, "oh my god, we're going to Rock Hall Day. Isn't this exciting?" to, "oh my god, what is that? Are we going to explode and die?" To like, "okay, let's take stock and figure out if we're going to be okay. Oh my god, yes, we're going to be okay because I've got BoatUS," and then it comes back down of like, "20 minutes of sitting here and only like half a bag of ice." [Laughs] And then they show up and literally...just delightful captains.

SARAH LAWRENCE: It's good to see them when you need them.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:51:24] Oh my god. And I realized that's, that's the other part of it is when you're out on the water, everybody waves on the water. And it is this camaraderie of...it's the fellowship of the water that really comes across. [Laughs] And you feel it, especially when somebody is coming to help you.

JENIFER DOLDE: All right, one final question from...from me. And it's really actually what we can all observe about you and what Kristin has created in interviewing you is...is you know kind of a really an innate camaraderie that I see springing up between you all and connection and community with other female captains

or maybe that's not what it is. You know, tell me about some of those connections you feel with the greater boating community with other female captains with this group of people and what you have taken away from that.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: [00:52:16] I think Kristin has taken on a great project and we all want to thank you for that because we wouldn't be here without you doing your project. And this is the first time I've really had a chance to meet these lovely ladies. And I'm sure we'll stay in contact one way or another. But you know, we...I've met a few female captains. On the waterways not very many but we're encouraging more and more women to get behind the wheel.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:52:47] Yeah, I mean, I'm...First of all, if you all don't know, seafarers...they do so many cool projects out on the Bay. They're so engaged as a community and really you want to talk about people connecting on the water they're doing it as hard as any club possibly can and it's super impressive. Kristin, I remember having a conversation with her about female captains and I was like, oh there's tons of us. And it's because as soon as you're in this. Community, you're like, yep, I know her, I know her, and I know her, and let me recommend so-and-so to you because if you know it...you spot each other quickly.

As the is the impolite way of saying it. I'm not exactly sure what I'm trying to say here other than yeah, you do gravitate towards your people. And women captains are my people.

KATE DUMHART: Yeah, even if we like have very different boating experiences. Be it where we went or how we do it or who we work for. Any number of things. I think there's always somebody who's going to, you know, appreciate my New Jersey boater safety course story or any number of other, hilarious tales of like, you just won't believe what this guy said. And I know that they will appreciate it in a way that like...my husband's gonna find it funny, but he's not...he'll appreciate it, but not the...it's not the same. He doesn't get it the same way. It's nice to have more people who can hear my hilarious anecdotes really.

SARAH LAWRENCE: [00:54:29] Having this community is kind of like tapping into continued education. So Lauren from Upper Chesapeake Boating School, she's got a boating school, I've got a boating school. We were chatting the other day. She's a *Her Helm* captain, for like an hour on the phone.

And I love it and I want to reach out to everybody more because there's so much we can learn from each other. So I'm glad to be part of that.

KATE DUMHART: Every time you put up a Facebook post I send it to my husband so he can sign his dad up for a class. Which is something he desperately needs and I did not know about before we were both in this project. So.

JENIFER DOLDE: [00:55:03] Okay, thank you all. I am going to open it up to questions from the audience and I don't know... You want to use that one? Okay and I don't know if we have any questions from, Zoom, but...

ALYSSA ZAJAN: Is this one on?

JENIFER DOLDE: Yes.

ALYSSA ZAJAN: There is one that was online and I'll get that started. And then as we do questions, if you're in the room, raise your hand. I will come to you with a microphone so that everyone on Zoom can also hear your question being asked. The question that was online...we'll start there...

was, "What is the most impressive or life-threatening situation you've been in?." Come up with one of those.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: [00:55:42] I have one. We were just coming out of Oyster Creek headed north towards the Bay Bridge.

And my husband said, "there's a line." And the line kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger. It was almost if a tsunami was coming at us. And what had happened, a large tanker I'm sure none of the ones these ladies were driving had gone by so quickly. It created this enormous wake. And my husband said, "we're gonna hit it." And he said, "well, slow her down." Like, you know, crank back. And it was still coming. So we hit it and the bow of the boat went all the way down it seemed like for feet and more feet. And then it came back up and we and we caught the second wave, and it was almost like being on a bull, riding in a rodeo.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Yeehaw.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: And that's exactly what I said. I was at the helm going, "yeehaw!" But we got through it safely and we continued on to Baltimore.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [00:56:56] Oh gosh, what was the life threatening or impressive? Oh hkay. Why is this so hard? This is really difficult because I know...

ALYSSA ZAJAN: This is your chance to brag.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I know, right? I should have all kinds of things.

JENIFER DOLDE: You can think about it.

KATE DUMHART: Impressive. Go impressive.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I'm trying. [Laughs] Okay, okay. 120-foot boat. It is my second week captaining it and we lose an engine and we lose an engine on our way to the dock. And I had already been coaching the mate to handle the throttles. And in that moment, we've got...we've got plenty of room. It's not that big a deal, but we had an approach plan that involved two engines and this was not...Yeah, anyway. So our approach plan has to change, but. My mate turns to me and he says, "Well, good thing you taught me to always go slower." And I was like, yes, you're right. Good job, you. So it's not my impressive moment and yet it is because he basically managed to take this vessel and put it on the dock in...in Fort Lauderdale in front of this entire yacht club of people. While I stood there and like just grinned like an idiot while the rest of the crew ran around and did other stuff and nobody knew I was captain but I felt like that was the moment that I felt the most captainway in my entire

life. Because my mate was so well trained that losing an engine mid-docking was not a problem.

KATE DUMHART: [00:58:49] I'm also gonna go impressive. So if you don't...*Sultana* has two captains, and Forrest Richards, who is delightful, is the senior captain. I got a sweet end of the deal. The senior captain has to do all the paperwork and the other captain gets to do more than 50 percent of the driving. I don't...I don't know how I worked that one out, but people over the internet: don't go spread that too far and wide. Anyway, my first year as captain, at the end of my first year as captain, Forrest was on paternity leave. So it's my first year driving and at the end of the year is Downrigging, our very big festival that we host in Chestertown. And it just so happened that that year a number of things coincided and on the Saturday afternoon sail, the last sail I was going to drive for the year, the French ambassador to the US was going to be in Chestertown at a waterfront home watching the sail. So I needed to fly a French flag past this very expensive waterfront home. That's part one. Part two, is that a former *Sultana* captain was in town for the weekend and she and her wife were coming sailing. Because they were coming sailing another former *Sultana* captain was coming sailing, because they were coming sailing *Sultana's* builder and his son was coming sailing, because they were coming sailing two

of our longest time volunteers were coming sailing and now I'm really running low on space on the boat because we sold basically the full capacity. And so I said, "I know we all want to hang out together and we all want to have fun. I'm going to have to kick crew off the boat. So that I can make space for you." And, so *Sultana* typically carries more crew than we are legally required to have. So I could get rid of two and make them wait on shore. Which I did because I convinced all of these VIPs that they were going to have to tend lines if they wanted to come sailing. And they all gainfully volunteered, which was great. So we get off the dock and we go down the river, and we set sail, we have a lovely time and we peel off early and we go back up because the house the way I need to sail past with the French flag is past *Sultana's* dock. So I go up river with my American flag still set and the sail still set and I'm sailing upriver with the wind. Up like with the current. Towards a fixed bridge that I can't go through.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I was gonna ask you, like how far...

[Laughs]

KATE DUMHART: Because the house is between the dock and the bridge.

There's only three houses between the dock and the bridge and it's one of them. And I told all of the passengers and all of our VIPs that we were going to take sail with the guns, which is a very cool thing where we need all of the crew to help fire the cannons and bring the sails down at the same time. And so...

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: She gets to fire cannons. Is anybody else insanely jealous of this? Like you could have just said that.

KATE DUMHART: [01:01:43] So we get everybody we've got our...we explain to the guests, the passengers how much fun it was going to be and how cool we were going to look and I enlisted some of them to help pull on lines. So we fire the guns, we take the sails down, we spin the boat around, and we strike the engines, you have to take it down to get the main down anyway, and then we put the flagstaff back in and we put the French flag up and we sailed down, or motored downriver past the dock and there's pictures somewhere on the Earth of the French ambassador weeping with joy with *Sultana* and the French flag cruising by behind him and then, that's not the end. I then, because Downrigging is so tight, and there's so many boats there, there's only one direction I can dock in and it is now with the wind and the current. In...in a very large boat with a lot of pokey-outey things, which is pretty much the hardest docking to do on

Sultana. And so I come into the dock and at a screaming four knots because it was the only way I was going to have control of the boat. And stopped it exactly in the spot I need. It was like the top 10 docking I had that year. Remember this is still my first year driving the boat. Top 10 docking the whole year with all these former captains on board I turned the engine off and I said, "yes, it is always done that way thank you so much." Don't come back for a while.

SARAH LAWRENCE: I'm like racking my brain, but one that comes to mind is...so living in the Bahamas, I was captaining a charter for the Moorings on a 48-foot sailing cat. For a bunch of loud, super fun Cubans. And if you know them, they like to wake up and drink rum. So we're sailing and the entire week that they were there. It was just the wind was just honking. So we were...we were heading back in to the harbor. I had the main up, reefed, little bit of jib out. And there was, I think there was nine of them. They're speaking Spanish most of the time, a little bit of English speaking. Anyways, they had a bunch of scuba tanks on board that were in the dinghy and it was rocking and rolling and the dinghy kind of tipped in the davits and all the scuba gear kind of started floating out, right? So all of a sudden [makes screaming noise] they all start jumping overboard and we're like getting pushed onto a lee shore. And so I'm like, "no, no, no

stop!" So now there's like five people in the water. So it's a man overboard, five people. They're like, super...they're trying to swim around and grab these tanks. So I kind of turn the boat up wind and I got the most capable person I could find to lower the dinghy. To go around and scoop up gear. I come up shut the engines off real quick get them back in the boat tell them that was not the best maneuver we could have just you know gotten the boat hook but that was fun I was like Chinese fire drill kind of thing. We survived.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I'm so upset for you right now.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1: I had a question, but you've just answered what your white-knuckle moments were like. So thank you.

[Laughter]

KATE DUMHART: [01:04:50] While we move the microphone. I'll just add. We were...I was talking with someone else the other day about just how time slows down when something goes wrong and what you know is probably a five-minute situation you solved feels like 12 hours went by.

SARAH LAWRENCE: That's true.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #2: Kind of on that topic. Is this on? Something that I have heard. I'm sure all of you feel this, have practiced this but I've heard you say it Gerrie and you say it Kate, Boomies and also Judy you've also talked about it. Of your big goal of going out in the water is to not have any danger stories coming back. And it sounds like that s mostly successful.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: Very much so. I don't wanna have any bad stories to tell. So we...we try to take, you know, all precautions. To be sure that we have safe fun sailing. Boat motoring. I don't do sailboats.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [01:05:51] No, no, but...

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: We're motorboaters.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I love, so you've got quite the cruising vessel. I don't know if you all know what kind of boat she was talking about earlier, but it's a beautiful cabin cruiser and...You must go all over this Bay. That's gotta be... that's, I mean, what kind of...how many days in the summer are you on this? You can pretty much live on it.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: Yeah, we have a pretty aggressive cruise schedule with the Seafarers. We did about what 17 trips? About 17 trips during the summer, we go to different marinas and spend the weekends and since we've been retired, we now start our weekends on Thursdays. And we, and we, we might come back Monday.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I love that. It's really, that's such a great way to see this Bay. What's been the... your most surprising port of call.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: Surprising? I don't know surprising...my favorite, after St. Michael's is Herrington Harbor South. Because it's just so beautiful. It's...it's as if you're in the Caribbean.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I really like the food there.

GERRIE ISABELL-MCCOTTRY: [01:07:03] They do have good food too. And our grandkids love it because the pool is right there. They have a beautiful pool.

ALYSSA ZAJAN: Any other questions from the room or from Zoom or from our panelists to each other? You're more than welcome to ask each other questions.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #3: [01:07:19] Here. Hello, I am a captain of my 48 Sea Ray Sun Dancer. I don't have a license yet but I'm studying for the six pack. I know I don't need it, but I just want it. So I was thinking you should have pulled out the day shape for sailboats under motor. To just show it to him.

KATE DUMHART: See, if the guy from New Jersey had said that he would have been right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #3: Of studying too much clearly. But what is your advice, so I have a...my husband, we call him the Admiral because he just orders everybody around and he knows what he's doing, like your husband.

When you get to a docking and you have your mates and your lines, people out, and you have a plan because you always have a plan. How do you guys deal with overzealous dock hands that wanna kind of redirect where you have your lines going? When you're in the middle of a docking and you want your spring on and they're doing all kinds of...and I'm trying to tell my girls, "Nope, we told them where we want the lines. They need to

redo it, or don't let them put it on the wrong pole." So do you guys have experience with that?

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [01:08:23] Oh my god, yes. Oh my god. Okay. I have experienced this so many times and it was because I had spent time literally training mega yacht marinas for how their dock staff should handle lines for incoming vessels. But these are mega yacht marinas where every boat is over a hundred feet, and they stand there at attention until you hand them in the line and they fully expect you to tell them what cleat to put it on and then they step away and they smile at you and do nothing else. They're great. But then you'll show up to some of these smaller places. Where boaters are usually single-handing or it's just you know one or two people on board and they do have to rely a bit on somebody who catches the lines and puts it where it's supposed to go. And they get overzealous is the word. And my biggest problem is...none of them know your boat. And they'll tell you things like, oh, just throw it in reverse. But if you've got massive prop walk and it'll pull you away from the dock. That might not be the right answer. Or they'll tell you. You know, throw me a spring line and we'll just spring you into the dock. The reality is most sailboats, that forward cleat is...or that midship cleat is actually too far forward. So if you're springing off of it to come into the dock and slow

yourself down. You're going to slam your bow in really, really hard. And they're not used to that because they're used to powerboats, which actually have a midship cleat that is midship or further aft. So it's this...it's this frustrating thing where I watch dock hands. Who have been trained in a certain way and they don't know your boat. How I combat that. So the combat is: be more boring than they can handle. And what I mean by that is I don't give them a line until I'm already in the slip basically. And I tell my crew, "hey, we're not...nobody's jumping to the dock. We are stepping off this boat. And I want you to step off the boat with the line." If I don't have crew and I have to rely on a dock person, I still am kind of operating under the same situation where I'm going to put it there. And then I'm gonna deal with the lines. And it's a rare day that it's blowing stink and I have to do something crazy. If that's the case, I've already screwed up that I'm single handing under ugly circumstances so it really is a prep.

KATE DUMHART: *Sultana* is a little noticeable coming into the dock really, really stands out, in the Chesapeake Bay towns. And so I often have people who are strangers to me who are not employed by any marina who I know nothing about just show up at the dock to help. And it's not helpful because they don't know

where I want things. And it is very hard to calmly and directly say, "the crew are gonna handle that. Thank you so much. "

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I actually knew a captain who would throw out fake lines. Like I'm serious so it was a it was a charter book in in the Keys and they would throw fake lines to the dock.

KATE DUMHART: [01:12:16] That's an excellent idea. [Laughter]

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I forgot about him. Oh, man.

KATE DUMHART: So yeah, I typically...we typ.... have one *Sultana* crew step off the boat. Not jump and put the lines where they need to go. And I then can tell all of the helpful people like, "The crew know where I want things. They're going to take care of it. I really appreciate your help." Like, I'd...I'd love to answer some questions about the boat for you after the engine's off. Just hang out for a second, take a step back so we don't hit you. And then I do recruit some volunteers because I know people who sail skipjacks in other towns that we go to. And what I do for them is I put big blue painters tape numbers on the pilings and then I can throw them a line and say put it on the one that says number one. If we're there for a week, I tape them the first day when I'm happy with where they are and then all

week I can come in and anybody who's there I can say put it on that one I labeled for you.

SARAH LAWRENCE: [01:13:23] I like that, set lines. Yeah, so the loop goes to the person and they know what piling to put it. But I do, when I'm going to a new spot, spend a lot of time retying.

ALYSSA ZAJAN: Alright, we had one online. That was...I'm gonna read it. "My husband and I have a 52-foot Midnight Lace twin engine, no bow thruster, do any of you offer private lessons to teach me to dock this big boat?"

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Yes. [Laughs]

ALYSSA ZAJAN: Yeah, plug yourself.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: I mean, I'm gonna plug you. [Gestures to Sarah Lawrence] Because I'm busy.

SARAH LAWRENCE: [01:13:59] I say we we both do.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: Yeah, yeah, I would say I think everybody does. If you are looking for somebody to coach you on your personal vessel, there's a lot of folks in the Chesapeake Bay that do a fantastic job with this. We...we're not the only ones.

And you know, it's gonna depend on you how you learn if...if that person is the right fit then they're the right fit. I...I do a lot of humor if you're not into that, you're not gonna like working with me.

KATE DUMHART: Does anybody have a boat I could practice docking that is not a topsail schooner? I'd love to just see what it's like to just, you know, handle like a, you know, 30-foot like trawler or something.

KATE HOLLINGSWORTH: [01:14:46] You're going to get so bored.
[Laughs]

KATE DUMHART: I just need to do it once so I know.

SARAH LAWRENCE: Blindfolded.

JENIFER DOLDE: All right. Okay, one last question.

ALYSSA ZAJAN: This is our last question. I got a hand up here.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #4: [01:14:59] Do you know of any women who work as pilots either in the Bay or elsewhere?

KATE DUMHART: Is her picture on the wall? It's in the book.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #4: Okay I got to buy the book.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yes, right over here.

ALYSSA ZAJAN: That's a great segway to the fact that you...there are *Her Helm* books behind Jen over there.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yup, and Kristin Rutkowski is here. Thank you all so much for being here this evening. It was a great conversation and you know I'm going to be inspired by what Kate said which is, "there's the horizon. I want to go there." I think that's great inspiration for life. Thank you again so much. Thank you.

SARAH LAWRENCE: Thank you for having us.

ALYSSA ZAJAN: [01:15:44] Great, excellent. Like we said, there are books in the corner, Kristin's here, and you're also welcome to if you didn't get a chance to look at some of the portraits around the room, take a chance.

JENIFER DOLDE: Yeah.

[Indistinct talking]

01:19:57.051: END OF AUDIO