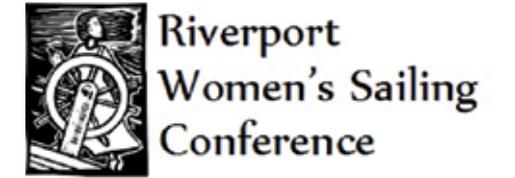


First Riverport Women's Sailing Conference

by Deborah Medenbach



The Riverport Women's Sailing Conference Logo, designed by Dale Wolfeld

The first Riverport Women's Sailing Conference will draw women from up and down the Hudson River on March 25 for a day of education, networking and skill building at the Riverport Wooden Boat School on the grounds of the Hudson River Maritime Museum.

Modeled on the National Women's Sailing Conference, which has endorsed this project, beginner and advanced women sailors can expect a full day of eight hands-on and classroom workshops taught by experienced instructors. The women-teaching-women format is useful in encouraging sailors to step forward with confidence from supportive crew members to managing their own sailboats. Courses include beginning sailing and basic seamanship; advanced racing starts;

river cruising, navigation, anchoring and safety around larger commercial vessels; buying your first boat and spring boat prep; basic diesel engine systems and maritime electrical systems; boat organization and sail care.



Riverport Women's Sailing Conference organizer Deb Medenbach, with daughter Sarah Perrotta, aboard sailboat Elan after a race. Photo by Barry Medenbach



Deb Medenbach climbs the mast to solve rigging issues aboard Elan before a race with the Kingston Sailing Club. Photo by Sherri Hill

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The day was organized by Kingston Sailing Club officers Deborah Medenbach and Jody Taffet Sterling, each lifelong sailors who have participated in the National Women's Sailing Conference in the past. "My first time on a sailboat was racing at age six on my father's 19-foot Thistle on Long Island Sound," recalled Sterling. "I was terrified and spent the entire time crying, crouched by the centerboard trunk, but I begged to go again and again. Apparently, my love for sailing was stronger than my fear!"

Sterling went on to become a proficient racer on several family boats and is the current Race Committee Chair for KSC. She will teach a course on how to choose your first sailboat and general spring boat preparation.

"Participants at the Riverport Women's Sailing Conference will find an amazing, supportive community of people. At my workshop, I will go over many facets to consider when buying a boat and prepping the boat for sailing, and I hope participants will consider the facts, listen to their gut and move forward into their sailing dream."

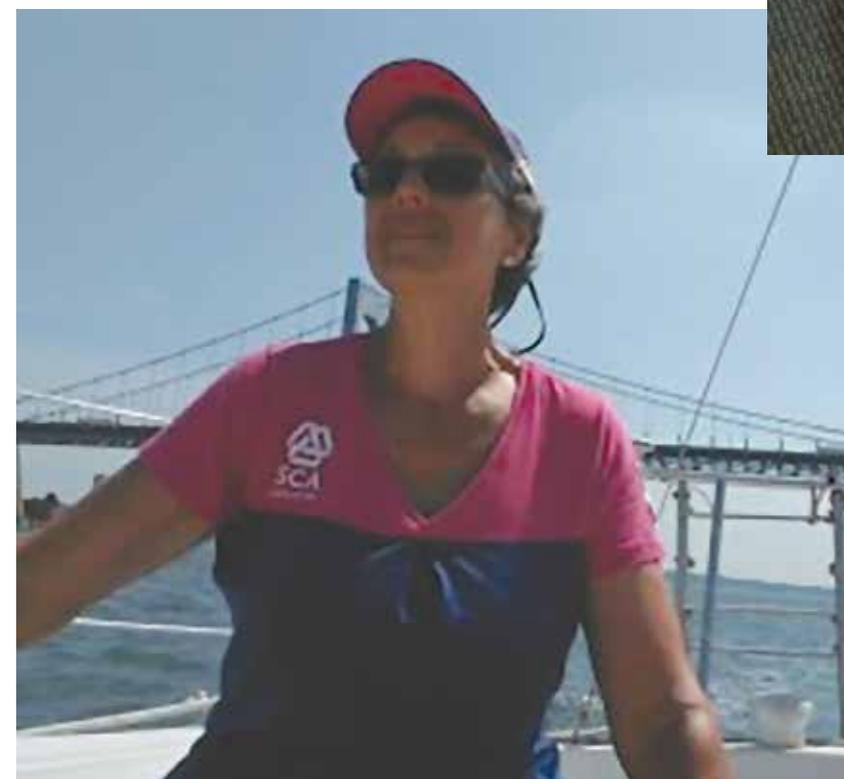
Annika Savio will teach an introduction to marine electrical systems for the conference. Savio got her start as a student sailor with the Sea Education Association and then went on to crew on educational tall ships, including as engineer on sloop Clearwater and Spirit of South Carolina.

Event chair Deb Medenbach, the current Cruise Committee Chair for KSC, has served as an Adventure Sail skipper in Boston for the National Women's Sailing Association and has been a boat transport crew member from Antigua to Bermuda. She has raced with the Kingston Sailing Club for 20 years.

"I know so many fine sailors who have served in every position on their boats but have a tough time taking the helm. The more



Annika Savio, an engineer aboard the Sloop Clearwater, will teach an introduction to marine electrical systems at the Riverport Women's Sailing Conference on March 25.



Jody Taffet Sterling at the helm of Taffy Girl. Sterling will teach a class on buying your first boat and spring boat preparation at the Riverport Women's Sailing Conference. Photo provided.

you know, the more confidence you have," Medenbach said. "We welcome Ann Loeding, a tugboat captain, who will give a workshop on navigation and safety for sailors around large vessels, which is of increasing importance as more barges transport on the Hudson River."

Registration is limited to 60 participants. Register by March 11. Sailors from out of area are welcome and special hotel rates have been secured at the Best Western Plus in Kingston. Registration is \$65; \$60 HRMM members. To register, go to hrmm.org. For course questions, email dmedenbach@gmail.com.