

## **2023 WOWazR! Coach & Staff Roster**



### **Betsy Alison, Coach**

2011 Sailing Hall of Fame inductee and current World Champion in the Hansa 303 singlehanded class, Betsy started sailing at age seven, because her father insisted. Grumpy at first, soon Betsy was singing with her pals as they slipped happily over Barnegat Bay. In 1977 she found herself at Tufts University, which happened to have the best sailing team in the country. When her father died during her freshman year, a friend persuaded her to go sailing on Upper Mystic Lake. It was then Alison realized her natural aptitude for the sport. A self-described seat-of-the-pants sailor, she learned the technical side from talented Tuft's teammates. She credits numerous mentors, like Dave Perry who told her to buy a Laser, then told her how to sail it in heavy air: "pull everything tight and hike" (she did, winning her first, full-rig Laser regatta); her coach Joe Duplin, who pushed her to do more than she thought possible; and fellow collegians like Ken Read, Tommy Lihan, Morgan Rieser, and Lynn Jewell Shore. An Honorable Mention for All-American at Tufts in 1981, Alison has a unique ability to quickly apply what she learns. Ken Read told her how to sail a J-24 over lunch, after which she won the first of her five Women's Keel Boat Championships. Voted Rolex Yachtswoman of the Year a record five times, Alison says she never felt discriminated against on the water: "When you get the job done on the race course, you develop respect." In 1998, Allison was asked to coach the USA team in the World Disabled Sailing Championship. Today she is the US Sailing Team Sperry Top-Sider Paralympic Coach. Alison is the 2000 BoatUS/National Women's Sailing Association Leadership in Women's Sailing honoree.



### **Louise Bienvenu, Coach**

Louise Bienvenu lives in New Orleans, and is lucky enough to sail year round on Lake Pontchartrain. Louise was a latecomer to sailboat racing, crewing in her first regatta at age 28. She caught the bug, and bought a J22 LOLA. Louise regularly races J22s, J80s, Vipers, and in PHRF. She's a member of New Orleans Yacht Club, Corinthian Sailing Association and Lake Pontchartrain Women's Sailing Association, which she founded in 2003 and served as the first commodore. Louise is also the skipper of TEAM NEW ORLEANS, a women's match racing team that has sailed in regional/ national/ international events. Louise is also a cruiser. In 2021 she crewed with Guenevere Rae on her Cal29, double-handed, to the Florida Keys from New Orleans. In March 2020, Bienvenu created the Single/Double Handed Sailing Association, racing Sundays with staggered starts during the first year of the Pandemic (No "club racing" was allowed

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during shutdown. The series was nicknamed Lulu's Outlaw Sailing Club.) In recognition of leadership, the Corinthian Sailing Association honored her as 2020 Sportswoman of the Year.



### **Naomi Emerson, Coach**

Naomi Emerson inherited her love of sailing from her Dad learning on the family's Mistral 16 and at camp on lasers on lakes in Quebec, Ontario, then cruising the Gulf Islands (B.C) on a Hughes 31. Currently, her sailing playground is Lake Mead, NV where she races with the Nevada Yacht Club on various keelboats both as skipper and crew and has raced Hobie Waves with Hobie Fleet 51. Emerson is certified to teach ASA101 and the USPS curriculum (Las Vegas Squadron) She teaches students on Lake Mead on a Catalina 27 and a Catalina 38. She holds a Captain's Level V Certification from NauticEd and an USCG OUPV 6-pack. She has skippered bareboat charters (with her husband as first mate) in the BVI, Antigua and B.C. She completed an Atlantic Passage from Norfolk to Bermuda on an Island Packet 40 with the Maryland School of Sailing. She currently serves proudly as Secretary on the Board of NWSA. Naomi is the creator of the YouTube Channel The Desert Sailor from boatLUV and Founder and creator of [www.boatluv.com](http://www.boatluv.com).



### **Debby Grimm, PhD, Coach**

Debby Grimm began sailing at Girl Scout camp in Indiana. She now competes in New Orleans regattas often skippering their family boat, Hot Chocolate a J30. Grimm is a six-time Gulf Yachting Association Women's PHRF Champion and multiple winner of the Coco Seemann Regatta (one design keelboat women's regatta). She took honors multiple times for both the Race for the Roses and Women's Trilogy on the Gulf Coast. Debby Grimm was female sailor of the year at New Orleans Yacht Club in 2001 and Southern Yacht Club's outstanding woman sailor in 2012 and 2021. Grimm was a founding member and currently serves as Commodore of the Lake Pontchartrain Women's Sailing Association. Dr. Grimm is a research scientist at Tulane's Coordinated Instrumentation Facility. She

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is married to Casey Grimm, and they have a daughter, Kaylor. Grimm joined the National Women's Sailing Association board in 2021. She currently serves as President.



### **Capt Debbie Huntsman, Coach**

WOWazR! Regatta chair, Debbie Huntsman began sailing as an adult. After she turned fifty, she became helmsperson with an all women's race crew on Lake Pleasant. Since then, she has raced regularly both on Lake Pleasant, Lake Pontchartrain and along the Gulf Coast. In 2017 she crewed in the Pensacola a la Habana race finishing third overall and first in class. Since 2019 she has been honing her double-handing skills on her 37' sloop, NOW in San Diego. Huntsman has instructed for Lake Pontchartrain Women's Sailing Association, National Women's Sailing Association, Gail Hine Presents Sailing Convention for Women, US Sailing, US Coast Guard Auxiliary, National Safe Boating Council, as well as several states. She brings with her local knowledge of Lake Pleasant as her home sailing grounds. Huntsman joined the National Women's Sailing Association in 2017. She has served on Women's Sailing Foundation's executive board since 2019.



### **Haley Lhamon, Coach**

Haley King Lhamon loves cruising but also is a notable racer. Haley won the 2007 Thistle Women's Nationals. She also co-skipped/navigated Team Sail Like a Girl's Melges 32 to victory in the 2018 Race to Alaska. It was the first monohull and first all-female team to win the race. A former elementary and learning support teacher, Haley currently works as coordinator of the Park & Rec sailing program on Bainbridge Island, west of Seattle. She is also a coach for the high school sailing team. Haley serves on the board of The Sailing Foundation where she works with the youth committee and volunteers for Safety at Sea seminars. At Port Madison Yacht Club, where Haley is membership chair and a recent past commodore, she and the rear commodore, Lindsey Lind, started a monthly women's group to

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engage more women in sailing in a low-key program that is both educational and social. They now have 80 women signed up! Haley is passionate about giving back to sailing through skill and safety instruction, building community, and promoting stewardship of the oceans.



### **Gail Turlock, Coach**

A 2021 Summer Solstice Sailing Ambassador, lifelong sailor and Richmond, Michigan resident, Gail is an active Sunfish and offshore sailboat racer. A member of the Gull Lake Sunfish Club & Greater Detroit Sunfish Club, Lake Michigan Sail Racing Federation, DN Ice Yacht Racing Association and Gull Lake Ice Yacht Club, Gail is a veteran of 44 Chicago-Mackinac Races, 18 Port-Huron Mackinac Races, a Conch-Republic Cup, over 25 Queen's Cups, has won the Midwest Collegiate Freshman Championship and raced in over 30 Classes winning 7 Sunfish World Championships.



### **Ella McCullough, Coach**

Ellie McCulloch started learning to sail late, three decades and three, or depending on how you count, four boats ago. In the beginning Ellie had a naïve idea that sailing was simple, and she could save a lot of money by traveling via sailboat. She learned race boats always need extra people. So she joined a racing club. Eventually Ellie met an exceedingly kind skipper at a yacht club party. He invited her onboard for Wednesday night racing. Ellie showed up faithfully, tried her best even though she was always left bruised and exhausted. Then she volunteered to compile the sailing club newsletter. Suddenly everyone knew her. She crewed a lot more, with different skippers and different boats, in all kinds of conditions. She became a partner on a Columbia 22 called *Ina Earl*. She was really learning about sailing. She took many classes, sailed many races and had many exciting sails on *Ina Earl*. Then Ellie bought her own filthy, run down Cape Dory called *Muse*. She cleaned her, fixed her, and brightened her canvas, teak, and cockpit. She built a vang, a traveler, bilge drainage hoses, whatever the boat needed. Then started racing *Muse*, the prettiest boat on the lake. It was slow but sturdy and earned Ellie some thrilling trophies. Ellie's yacht club often put new sailors on *Muse* for Wednesday night racing. *Muse* was a logical choice for newbies was easy to sail, Ellie always practiced

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excellent seamanship and she taught her crew the same. Innumerable people had their first sail on *Muse*. They always had a good time. Ellie's put her experience to work to restore a 50-year-old Flying Scot for the Lake Pontchartrain Women's Sailing Association (LPWSA) members to share. After a decade with *Muse* and looking to earn speed and more trophies, Ellie bought *Good Juju* a J80. Ellie says, "I am still learning about sailing."



### **Capt Emily Zugoni, Coach**

Emily grew up sailing on the estuary and San Francisco Bay on her grandfather's Tartan 30, Lelo Too. In her twenties she turned her passion for sailing into a career by earning her Coast Guard Merchant Mariner License, and instructing at the Alameda Community Sailing Center (ACSC) and Club Med in Florida. Emily later inherited Lelo Too (and her crew!) and they continue to race on the Oakland-Alameda Estuary weekly. Emily is currently the Program Director at Alameda Community Sailing Center and an instructor at Club Nautique.



### **Capt Karen Prioleau, Coach**

Karen enjoys buoy racing as a past time, and has often competed in Newport – Bermuda Races. She has extensive offshore sail experience and training. Karen has spent the better part of her adult life teaching and developing better ways to get people on the water. Karen has taught women sailing for close to 30 years. She was a captain for many years on Alaska Eagle, a Swan 65, owned by Orange Coast College School of Sailing and Seamanship (OCC-SSS) in Newport Beach, CA. She skippered two all-women cruises between Honolulu and Tahiti. There were nine adult women each time as student crew. She has also taught incoming US Naval Academy midshipmen to sail during plebe

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summer. Not only is she a role model for women, but a model for men, demonstrating women can be fully competent and in charge on the water. Ashore she does the same in her presentations at safety at sea courses and professionally teaching maritime licensing and credential courses at the Professional Mariner Program at Orange Coast College at Newport Beach, CA.



### **Jennifer (Jen) Lee, Coach**

Jen is a sailor from Portsmouth, RI and grew up sailing in junior sailing. She raced in high school and college before moving to Arizona. During college, she held her US Sailing Level 1 certification and taught sailing. In Arizona, she races her sunfish in Tempe and recently won the Arizona Yacht Club Championship for the second year running. Jen is the current US Sunfish Class West representative and one of the founders of Women of Arizona Yacht Club, WAYC (pronounced “wake”). Professionally Jen is an audiologist in Flagstaff.



### **Charlie Arms, Coach**

Charlie was born in Newport, RI into a Navy family that moved often. The family moved to San Diego where Charlie learned to sail and began racing. After college Charlie returned to San Diego. She became an active member of the Women’s Yacht Racing Fleet. She won the US Women’s Double-handed Championship in 1998 and was an avid match racer for 10 years. She retired as the Director of Sailing for the California Maritime Academy in Vallejo, CA after 16 years, which included two College National Offshore Championships leading to racing in the Student World Yachting Cup. Settling in Annapolis MD, Charlie Arms works as the Executive Director of the Brendan Sailing Program, building self-confidence in children with Learning Differences through sailing. She also teaches Instructor Training courses in Keelboat, Powerboat and Small Boat. Arms is an International Umpire and enjoys giving back to the sport umpiring, judging and through race management.

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### **Wendy Larson, PRO**

Wendy Larsen has been sailing for almost 50 years, having learned in her early teens on Lake Erie and Hoover Reservoir in Ohio. Over the years she has sailed many types of boats from a Sunfish to a Beneteau 42. She has cruised and/or raced out of ports in North America & the Caribbean from the Great Lakes and Antigua and along all three US coastlines. Wendy began racing in 2003 with the Arizona Yacht Club on a J/24. She and her husband, Dave, built a Mini-Transat 650m and they sail it on Lake Pleasant. Wendy is certified by US Sailing as a Principal Race Officer and is an International Yacht Training Worldwide certified instructor. She is also an instructor/leader with Sea Scout Ship 3500, based in Phoenix.



### **Dianna Andress, Manager**

Dianna started sailing in 2005 on Lake Pleasant in the Arizona desert after completing the ASA 101 class and bought a Catalina 25. Soon after, she joined the Lake Pleasant Sailing Club and started cruising. She also crewed on various boats with the Arizona Yacht Club, soon discovering she wanted to be the one in charge. Andress acquired a Santana 20 and developed an all-woman crew. After that, she was hooked on racing! Along with a group of sailing friends Andress charters a boat to a beautiful and exotic location every other year.