



KRISTINA DORSEY

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## *Sailing into a writing career*

Back when Carol Newman Cronin was a Connecticut College student in the mid-1980s, it was still the early days of the school's sailing team.

It had just transitioned from a club to a team. It still had no full-time coach, although a part-time coach came onboard during Newman's sophomore year. The team went to the national championships for the first time.

Cronin recalls now that the team was, at heart, a lot of self-motivated people working together to make something better.

Self-motivation is a recurring theme in Cronin's life. It was a trait that was key in her becoming an Olympic sailor and, now, in her new incarnation as an author.

"Nobody is making me sit down to write fiction that may or may not be published," she says.

Cronin — who has always been interested in writing and whose grandmother was a novelist — returns to the area on Saturday to read from and sign her young adult novel, "Oliver's Surprise: A Boy, A Schooner, and the Great Hurricane of 1938," at 2 p.m. at Mystic Seaport.

Cronin is a perfect example that focusing on a given subject in college doesn't necessarily restrict someone to a certain career path.

She graduated from Conn College in 1986 with honors and a degree in European history. But she went on to work in boatyards. She wrote about the marine industry for such magazines as "Sailing World" and "Seahorse." And she worked in graphic design.

Looking back, she learned a great deal during her time on the water at Conn, about the nitty-gritty of sailing — being out in the "very shifty" winds of the Thames River has its benefits — but also about the very real possibility of Olympic sailing.

One of her Conn teammates, Tom Olsen, was the first person she knew who was doing any sailing outside of college, and he was involved in the Olympic campaign.

She kept sailing after college and, in 2001, became a member of the elite U.S. Sailing Team. She raced as part of the U.S. team at the 2004 Olympics in Athens.

## *Drive spells success for sailor, author*

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She didn't medal but says, "It was so exciting being there, and the overall experience was just amazing. There are a lot of statistics about how few first-time Olympians win medals, and it doesn't surprise me at all because it's such an overwhelming experience. ... You're dealing with all these distractions, both good and bad."

Now, she continues to sail — and continues to write. Her book "Oliver's Surprise," published by GemmaMedia, came from a Christmas story that Cronin, who lives in Jamestown, R.I., told her nephew. It's about a 12-year-old boy named Oliver who is hiding out on a schooner, hits his head, and wakes up in 1938 Jamestown.

As with much in Cronin's life, it seems that self-motivation works. A second edition of the book is in print, and the sequel will be published next year.

**This is the opinion of Kristina Dorsey.**

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