



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Office of Marine Safety

Interview Summary

Accident: Fire aboard Small Passenger Vessel *Conception* (NTSB No. DCA19MM047)

Date: September 2, 2019 at 0314 PDT

Location: Platts Harbor, Pacific Ocean near Santa Cruz Island, California, 34°02.99' N, 119°44.10' W

Person Interviewed: Mrs. G. Kraeger, passenger on *Conception* August 26 to 28, 2019

Interview Conducted By: Adam Tucker, NTSB – by telephone

Summary Provided By: Adam Tucker, NTSB

OVERVIEW

Mrs. Kraeger was interviewed via telephone on May 5, 2020, between 1205 and 1235 EDT in conjunction with the investigation into the September 2 accident involving the small passenger vessel *Conception*, which caught fire and eventually sank while it was anchored in Platts Harbor off Santa Cruz Island, California. Unless specifically delineated by quotes, the text that follows is not a verbatim record of the conversation. It has been developed from notes taken of the interview.

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Mrs. Kraeger had organized a trip for her, two instructors and students for the Illustrated Water Color Group from August 26 to August 28, 2019. She had previously chartered the *Vision* about 10 years ago and had done so about 8 to 10 times. She recalled the trips were great.

For the August 26 to 28, 2019 voyage, Mrs. Kraeger requested the *Vision* but it was not available, so she went with the *Conception*. They had a mostly full group of people along for the trip. The Illustrated Water Color Group was not a dive group. The group mostly comprised of females and were on board to see and visit the Channel Islands and learned to draw and paint nature related material. She recalled that no one had any type of battery powered devices beyond cell phones, tablets and laptops. Most of the materials they brought aboard was art supplies.

Mrs. Kraeger said they boarded the *Conception* on August 25. Their instructions were that they could board she thought any time after 1900 to 2000. She wanted to get set up before the group arrived so she requested to board 30 minutes before the everyone which was permitted by Truth Aquatics. The remainder of the group fizzled in with the last persons arriving about 2130. When asked if there were any crew on board during the time her and the other passengers boarded, she said she did not see anyone but assumed there was someone in the wheelhouse/crew berthing above. She said she initially did the bunk assignments, but that it changed around once everyone got on board. She recalled there being a sign in sheet for all persons to sign in.

Mrs. Kraeger recalled that everyone went to their bunks about 2230 to sleep. She woke up around 0400 AM to the sound of the *Conceptions* main engines and movement in the seas shortly after.

The next morning around breakfast, Captain Jerry Boylan conducted the safety briefing with all the passengers. He also introduced all the crew to the passengers. She recalled all the crew by name except for one as being the ones that were on the *Conception* during the accident. The second captain was different on their trip. Captain Boylan briefed the passengers on lifesaving appliances and the emergency escape hatch, and main stairs from the bunk room. She noted Captain Boylan made sure everyone was there for the safety briefing and even had a crew member check all the bunks below to make sure no one was

missing from the briefing. She recalled that even back on her previous trips on the *Vision*, it was like that. Mrs. Kreager remembered that deckhand Allie Kurtz slept in the bunkroom with the passengers in the crew bunk for that trip.

When asked if there were any problems, issues and/or conditions she experienced on the trip, Mrs. Kreager stated no. There was nothing and all was normal and that she felt safe. She noted would have to go to the rest room two to three times per night and every time she would go, she would see the second galleyhand Michael Kohls in the galley. She said that Mr. Kohls was there each time she would go to the restroom.

The first day, the *Conception* anchored allowing her and the passengers to go ashore with a small boat. The second day they remained on board and Captain Boylan maneuvered the vessel slowly along the coastline.

She remembered the crew transferring the names from the sign in sheet to another laminated form they used for keeping track of people getting into and out of the water for snorkeling, swimming, and kayaking. She always saw a crew member keeping account of who was in and out of the water.

Mrs. Kreager said they all had a great trip to the islands and had nothing but a positive experience. She observed no problems with the crew. She noted the crew were "fantastic" and seemed to be a tight group and supportive of each other. The deckhand, Allie Kurtz, was new to the vessel and Mrs. Kreager remembered the Captain Boylan being very patient and helpful with her specifically noting this related to a task she was assigned to take up the anchor which required specific steps to do so. She also recalled deckhand Milton French was there to help her as well.

When asked if she had any pictures and video from their trip, Mrs. Kreager stated she did and would provide an e mail link to the photos.

END SUMMARY