Sheila Hughes

Born in Cincinnati, OH, Sheila's parents immigrated to the United States from Switzerland, her father being a banker and her mother a medical pharmacist. Although other children would tease Sheila in school for being an immigrant, she excelled in gymnastics under the guidance of her gym teacher. Sheila got upset when she was told by her parents that they were moving to the city, and she then ran away from home. Sheila managed to join the circus, at first cleaning after the animals and such, and later as a gymnast performing aerial stunts. On one occasion, Sheila was cleaning feces in the lion's cage and found herself face-to-face with the circus lion. Grabbing a nearby chair and whip, Sheila was able to keep the lion at bay while she worked her way out of the cage.

Sheila met her boyfriend Mac at the circus, who performed as a musician, and together they experimented with drugs. Having a no-tolerance policy, she and Mac were kicked out of the circus. Hitting a low point on the streets alone, Sheila took a job as an exotic dancer in a seedy bar. In a moment of crisis and understanding her predicament, Sheila prayed for guidance and entered the convent. It was when Sheila was at the convent that she had an altercation with one of the nuns and got kicked out of the convent for "having a bad attitude".

Being of strong mind and back on her feet, Sheila left the convent for a job with Norwegian Cruise Lines performing aerial stunts during Cique De Soleil shows. On one occasion, Sheila ran into Jimmy Buffett while the ship was docked in Tortola. Suitably impressed with her background and traveling to the various islands, Jimmy wrote the song "Big Top", and later founded the Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line (known today as Margaritaville At Sea cruise line). Having stayed in touch with Mac over the years, Sheila was able to refer Mac to Jimmy who was looking for a backup performer. Sheila has been a Parrothead ever since, accepting the position as Travel Trustee & Road Warrior for The Villages Parrot Heads Club.

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