

Carleton Tucker Award Nomination

Laura Sullivan, Division 4, Fleet 95

Laura Sullivan has upheld the Hobie Way of Life for what seems like a lifetime. She became involved with a Hobie 16 during the mid 90's with her husband, Jerry Valeske. Realizing this was not going to be their boat, they quickly moved to the Hobie 18. Jerry was not overly competitive on the water, but Laura wanted to compete at a higher level.

So in 2000 she teamed up with fellow fleet member Peter Nelson, a team that has sailed together for the past 18 years! Peter & Laura attended multiple US Sailing Multihull Championships, and have become a regular fixture at the North American Championships. Laura has sailed four World Championships in New Calendonia, Mexico, Fiji, and Australia. Wherever she goes she is warmly welcomed and exudes an infectious energy of helping others.

What stands out about Laura, is not her participation and support of the various regattas and events as sailors, but more her generosity and commitment to the sport of Hobie sailing as a whole and the people who are a part of that family. She has been Division 4 Chairperson longer than anyone can remember. Division 4 has been very

active both in its participation at events locally, as well as nationally and at Worlds. Much of that participation can be attributed to the leadership and stewardship Laura has brought to the division.

In “her spare time” Laura took on the role of Chairman of US Sailing’s Multihull Council during a turbulent period of transition. She successfully guided it by clearing out some of the old ways and instilling new visions and goals. A few years back Laura was recognized and honored by US Sailing as ‘Sailor of the Month’ for her efforts. Laura reflects the saying “if you want something done right, give it to a busy person!” She always gets it done and it’s done right!

She is constantly organizing a regatta, food, support, or trophies for regattas. Her meals are legend and have been the highlight of so many NW Area Championships at Lake Quinault, as well as elsewhere. In 2014, when Huntington Lake dried up and the Hobie 18 N. Americans were threatened to be cancelled, it was Laura who stood up, took the bull by the horns, and organized an epic event in just 6 short months. She also organized the first and only Hobie Wave Youth N. Americans in 2015 (with 22 competitors!).

Around 2002 Jerry & Laura purchased an RV and immediately added the personalized plate ‘HobieRV’. This quickly became Hobie Central at many of the events and regattas held in the division. It was the office, protest room, kitchen, classroom, game room, shower, lounge, transporter, storage locker and parts shed... all in one.

She and Jerry have crossed the country so many times double and triple stacked we have lost count! It is amazing what that RV can produce!

Laura's biggest achievement thus far has been the time, effort, and resources spent creating a youth movement in Division 4 and beyond. She has donated so much time and money to obtain boats for youth sailors. (She currently owns 8 Hobies!). She organized training sessions on and off the water, as well as support at local regattas. She took four teams (8 youth!) in the RV down to Huntington Lake in 2013 for the Youth N. Americans in what became the start of something much bigger. Last year she and Peter created the Multihull Youth SAIL Foundation (MY SAIL). Laura planted an acorn that is developing into a mighty oak!

Laura lost her husband, Jerry, in 2016. As you might expect it has taken a couple of years for her to get her feet fully on the ground. But even during those trying times she maintained a smile and continued to race Hobies. Today she carries on what they as a couple started - getting youth (and adults) on the water, feeding them, playing games with them, helping them laugh, and enjoying the Hobie Way of Life.

Laura has truly exemplified the spirit of the Hobie Way of Life and has touched the lives of so many people around her who benefited from her generosity.

Submitted by Paul Evenden, Peter Nelson, Jere Bott,

Division 4

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The following were other communication received for Laura Sullivan

Hi,
my name is Vanessa VonStubbe and I race a H18 with my dad in Fleet 95, part of Division 4. I would like to nominate Laura Sullivan from our fleet for the Carlton Tucker Award. I have been sailing for 20 years and Laura has been a mainstay within the fleet, instrumental at organizing regattas, events, dinners, just the glue for our fleet. She is a top competitor and tough as nails, she has suffered more racing related injuries and capsizes than anyone I know and yet keeps coming back for more. She's incredibly flexible, has no issues switching out her role as skipper or crew with various other fleet members. She is also very giving with her knowledge and resources as a Hobie sailor, there are no trade secrets with her, she really just wants to grow and improve the sailors within our fleet. I really just admire her and think of her as a role model. I think she exemplifies what it means to be a Hobie sailor, but also just an all-around good human. Thank you for the consideration!

-Vanessa VonStubbe

Hello mr James, my name is Jere Bott and I sail/ race a Hobie 18 with my youngest daughter. My older daughter crews on a Hobie 16. My eldest and I started racing about 4 years ago after buying our first 18. When we brought our boat home I didn't know anything about racing or sailing hobiecats. I called sailsand point, where my daughter was taking lessons, and they put me in touch with Laura Sullivan. Laura and her husband Jerry Valaski came right over to my house and spent a couple hours going over the boat and what I needed to do to race. They then met me and my family at lake quinault for the Fourth of July weekend and spent the time sailing with us. As you probably know Jerry passed away the next year, and even through that hard time has continued to give to the Hobie community and my family.

Laura has been a huge part of the Hobie youth fleet and has been instrumental in the development of both my girls sailing skills as well as so many other youth sailors. She has also been a large part of starting the MYSAIL non profit, which is set up to get youth sailing multi hulls. She has purchased all of the boats and donated them to maysail and has given selflessly of her time over the years to make sure that fleet 95 and division 4 youth programs have continued. She cooks for the kids, transports them, hauls the boats and organizes all of their events, as well as getting on the water and helping to teach. On top of all that she has helped plenty of adults learn to skipper and crew. Fleet 95 and division 4 wouldn't be if not for her hard work and giving.

There is no higher recommendation I could give to someone who truly defines giving!!

Jere Bott
Please call with any questions
253-335-8167

As you have seen from Jere Bott in an earlier email, we in Division 4 would like to strongly nominate our current Division Chair Laura Sullivan for the CT Award. I did submit last year but it was looked over for another. We feel that she is well deserving and well past due for this type of recognition for the amount of effort, money and time she puts into the Hobie Way of Life. Both her and Jerry were a huge team for many years leading the way in our division, and since his passing she has carried on the focus with tremendous support from other sailors in our division.

It would also be a tremendous honor to be able to present the award to her at the H16/ H20 NA's which are being held in our Division in September of this year.

I am sure you have a way, but it would be 'nice' if she was kept unaware of this nomination if it is at all possible.

If there are any questions or more information is required, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Paul Evenden
NRO, RMCC, CJ
Div 4 Vice Chair

I would like to add my name to the list supporting a nomination for Laura Sullivan.

I have worked with Laura as the Division 4 Treasurer for 8 years, and have known her much longer. She is very deserving of this award. She has pushed us all to be champions of the Hobie Way of Life, and to assure that it continues into the new generations of sailors.

One of the things that has always impressed me, is Laura's total support and defense of Hobie Cats in general, the Hobie Cat Company, and the Hobie Class Association. Through all the tough times of looking for ways to grow participation, many talks occurred about joining forces with non-Hobie events. Laura has been steadfast in reminding us all of the support the Hobie Cat Company and HCA has provided to all of us throughout the years. How they made possible the "Hobie Way of Life". Even with all her work with US Sailing, she stayed true to her Hobie Cat roots. That has helped guide us in our Division in using Hobie Cats for providing youth (and adult) learning and racing opportunities.

I would like to add a new story of her sportsmanship and effect on our Hobie sailors. May 4th and 5th 2019 we had our first 2019 Points Regatta at Cultus Lake BC. One young crew was unable to enter Canada from the US, leaving a disarray of Hobie 16 teams. A few changes were made, with Laura's two grand daughters crewing for two other Hobie 16 skippers. Meanwhile, Laura who had registered to race her own 16, took on another skipper Sam Robinson. Sam (late 20s ?) had been sailing an older 16 as has his dad, Larry, from Vancouver BC. But, Sam had not driven a newer 16 in race mode. Laura put Sam on the helm and had him skipper for the regatta. Sam came off the water gushing about the

newer boat and learning to drive it. He and Laura, with her super coaching on speed tweaks etc, had dominated the fleet. They went on to win the regatta. Sam now knows what he can do with a modern boat! It was one of the coolest things I had seen in a long time. With all Laura has done, and continues to do for youth sailing, this was a case of sharing her knowledge with another adult sailor within our Division.

I know this is just the latest in a long line of stories that can be told. I fully support Laura for the CT award!

Thank you,

Paul Carter
Hobie Class Division 4 Treasurer
Hobie Cat Fleet 95
Sailing Hobie Cats for 46 years

Herb, I don't know if you are the right person to send this to but I would like to nominate Laura Sullivan.

She is the heart and soul of fleet 95 and Div. 4. She gives of herself tirelessly planning and fixin' food, shopping for food, storing all the fleets bar - b -que etc,etc . She has a wave , 3-16's and an 18 and always good to make a boat a available for whoever wants to try a Hobie. She is the best of usshe deserves some recognition.

Thanks,
J Rosenbach

