

JERRY HUSE 1927- 2018

FELLOW SAILORS REFLECT

Bob Sevey recalls...

In the early 60's as a novice "C" boater I was having a good morning at a regatta on Minnetonka, not because of skill, but because the boat was fast.

At lunch Jerry Huse sat down across from me and complimented me on our sailing. I was flattered. This was The Jerry Huse. Then the question came. "How far up the mast could I touch my Jack stays?"

This wasn't sailing. This was fishing. My reply was "Mr. Huse, I'll tell you anything you want to know, but for every one I give I get one". A short pause and we had a deal.

Thus began a remarkable 50 year friendship of regatta house swapping and winter mogul grooming. So thanks Huse for asking.

Steve Avery recalls...

He was already a highly successful and revered C boat competitor when as an X boat skipper I first met him in 1950. How could I have imagined that he would be the face of C boat sailing on Okoboji for 60 more years and the most successful C sailor in the Inland for over a decade. His record against Buddy M., Gordy B., Jack S., and the other legends is more wins than losses. Jerry has been a competitor to all, sportsman to everyone, mentor to many, the Father of our yacht club, and great friend. We tip our hats to you. What a gentleman.

Steve Powers (Commodore 2010) recalls...

I grew up in a family of sailing siblings and parents who were involved in running the Wednesday series and encouraged and facilitated Regatta experiences. I also watched our C fleet sailers. During the 1959-1971 years Okoboji had the best C fleet in the



**Steve Powers &
Walter "The Wizard" Spevak**

country. Winning C championship regattas during those years didn't happen by chance.

I saw Jerry Huse and Boober Schneider sail their boats up the length of the lake, backdown and up again for hours. This practice outside the regular OYC racing activities is why they went to regattas confident in their boat speed and boat handling skills. Listening to their weekly chalk talks they often referred to things they had seen or heard from other masters and reading in sailing books. For the youth sailors of the OYC the message that Jerry Huse passed on was to sail every day you can. Don't limit yourself to race and sailing days. The more time you put into this wonderful sport, the closer you are to mastering it. Our own Jerry Huse established this legacy of excellence which you can add to. It is up to you now.

Walt Spevak recalls...

What to say about a fellow sailor whom I revered as a kid, gave me wise counsel as a teenager and became a friend and respected competitor over decades of racing. I suppose one could start at the beginning when in 1964 at the age of 10 I (almost) participated in my first sailboat race with Steve Powers (9) and Anne Powers (also 10). The three of us together weighed about 160 pounds. In a big south wind the judges were setting up a start line in the front of The New Inn and then OYC Yacht Club.

Jerry was Commodore of the OYC that year and had just received delivery of a shiny new orange Melges C. Before

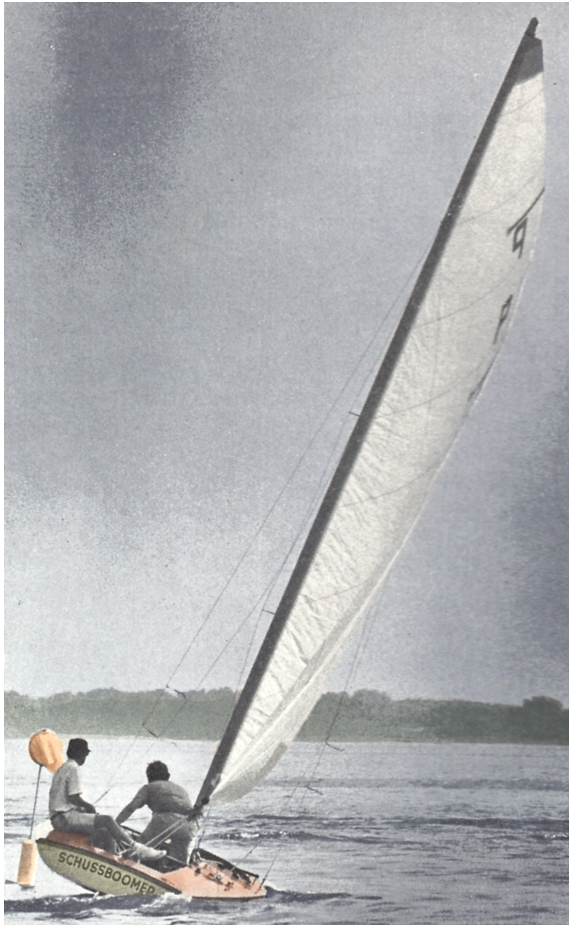
the C boats had even gotten into sequence the bow of Steve's X-boat road up onto the deck of Jerry's boat. He stood up and let us have it with words, so out of character for Jerry that would have made Boober proud. We started sobbing and limped our way to the yacht club to be rescued by Steve's parents. Such was my introduction to Jerry and the sport of sailboat racing.

In the 50+ years since I never heard Jerry utter a foul word. Of course who could hear him when the stern of Schussboomer was usually hundreds of yards ahead of the fleet? There may be a couple of seasons when we finished 2nd overall in the C fleet. Trust me, Jerry's dominance during those years was so great that the famous words spoken to the Queen of England after the 1st America's Cup

"Ah, Your Majesty, there is no second" applied.

Friendly competition grew into friendship and when it came time to apply to college I humbly asked "Mr. Huse" if he would write a letter of recommendation. He agreed. Thank you Jerry. My time at Stanford and affiliation as an alumni in the middle of Silicon Valley set my life on a path for which I am forever grateful.

During those years at Stanford in the mid-70s roll tacking came into popularity and early one summer my brother Jim and I began to roll-tack our boat to good effect. Jerry took notice, called the cottage and asked if I could show him how to do it. Imagine that? Jerry, who was dominating the C fleet



at the time wanting to learn a technique so he could be even better. We rigged a couple of Lasers and on the very first tack Jerry rolled the boat right on top of himself, capsized, fell out and lost his sunglasses. It was a short training session!

On those rare, rare, rare occasions when I would actually win a race Jerry would call the cottage shortly after to congratulate me on a race well sailed. Who does that?! Jerry Huse.

We can all learn from the boat preparation, on the water practice, physical conditioning and note taking that Jerry brought to his racing. Not to mention his grace and humility.

I know I certainly have. Thank you Jerry for a lifetime of memories where you set a standard of excellence in sailing and in life.

Lou Swartz recalls...

Jerry's first sailboat was a 14 foot "tub" with a gaf-rigged sail. Fran Lytle asked him to teach his four kids to sail, which he tried. By age 14 he acquired an Amundsen X-boat, which was free, since Amundsen was trying to compete with Johnson Boat Works. After winning most of the races as an X-boat skipper, his dad purchased Jim Fitzgerald's C-boat, when Jerry was 17. Jerry entered the C-boat fleet at the end of the summer after sailing a few times with Don Baxter and won all three races in the Labor Day Series! Jerry said that the veteran sailors, like John Corey, Fred Moore, Don Baxter, and John Doud were "really angry, really upset with me!" The rest of his racing career is history!



Andy Burdick recalls...

With great fortune I have been racing Melges C Scows since 1986. Racing with and against Mr. Huse. He is the best of the best. Not only in sailing skill but with on land politeness. A true gentleman.

My favorite office note was sent to me by Mr. Huse. Back from 1997. Along with a photo of the famous P-1 (Jerry Huse) along with Buddy Melges crewing. Of course the photo shows them dominating the race and beating the V-45 (Andy Burdick) by a lot.

Great love and respect for Mr. Huse!

