

## Presidents Report: David Starck

The Class is firing on all cylinders as I write this report. In general, things are really good. Sailors want to go Lightning sailing and are genuinely excited for the season to begin. Many sailors have their sights set on the 2024 Southern Circuit which begins next weekend at St. Pete. IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO SIGN UP!

The Executive Committee, along with GB members, have been hard at work over the past few months on several initiatives. I will list a few action items below I plan to touch on. However, I will let EC and GB members provide reports and updates.

1. Membership & Member Engagement
2. Marketing the Class / Flash Blast / Communications
3. Boats and equipment
4. International fleet development
5. 2024 ILCA Boat Grants
6. U32 Regatta
7. Lightning Labs

The Helly Hansen Sailing World regatta @ St. Pete last month was well attended. This multi-class event showcased the Lightning as one of the largest fleets. The Class will again participate in a Helly Hansen Sailing World Regatta in Marblehead, MA. This regatta will also serve as the Atlantic Coast Championship.

My focus as Spring approaches is to reach out to fleet and district leaders and offer my help. This is where we need to see growth in the class. We are a home grown, family class. I look forward to working with class members. I have attended a few winter/spring district meetings via zoom. It has been great to connect with Lightning sailors.

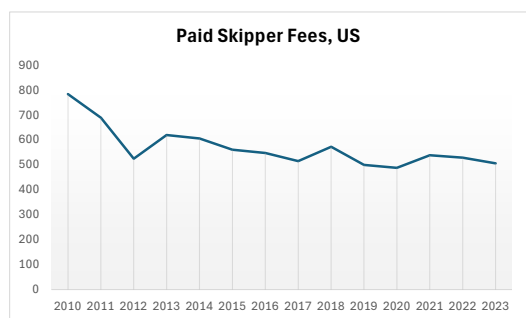
On April 13<sup>th</sup> I plan to attend a Classic Boat Workshop at the Finger Lakes Boating Museum. Thanks to Bob Astrove for organizing it.

Finally, my sincere thanks to Laura Jeffers for keeping the class on track!

## Treasurers Report: Bertie Werley

2023 Financials - Finished 5% below budget on expenses (\$86,358 actuals) and Finished 5.8% below budget on income (\$85,752 actuals).

2024 Budget - Budgeting income at \$94,230 – increase in US Skipper/Boat Owner memberships to 542 from 506 and budgeting expense at \$94,200 – increase in back-office support for publications, etc.



## Completed Projects:

**Auto-renewal membership** (US) project completed: 180 of 781 total skipper/family/etc. memberships were auto-renewal as of June 2023. We added 52 new auto-renewal membership (29% increase). New Total: 30% of total memberships are auto-renewal.

**Donation capabilities improved:** Added ability for recurring donations monthly or quarterly. Updated the Auto-Renewal notice to include a link to the Donation page. Updated the Automatic Payment Confirmation notice to include a link to the Donation page. Class Member Tom Starck made the suggestions; Laura did all the work!

## Member Marketing Plan – a work in progress

Objective: create a strategic roadmap to guide our actions, priorities, and messaging: RETENTION and RECRUITMENT.

Define Audiences – both US and International: Existing members, U32, Lightning sailors who have lapsed out of sailing (children, geography, income, etc.) but are ripe to re-enter, Major event marketing (PanAms, Worlds, Youth Worlds, NA's, South Americans, etc.)

Craft the message for each audience, including appropriate medium (digital, website, quarterlies, etc.)

Ensure cohesive messaging across all mediums.

### **Secretary Report – Julio Velez**

A big part of our management has been promoting our class to attract more young people to sail. For this reason, in the Lightning master plan, there is a U32 committee with a lot of initiatives for 2024. Our efforts have also been directed to South America.

This year, the Youth Worlds are in Algarrobo, Chile, a great and challenging place to sail. We are working to get the most participation from youth as possible from each country. In Ecuador, we already have two youth teams training.

Last year, we approached other countries in the region that do not sail Lightning to compete in the Pan American Games, encouraging them to participate. As a result of this initiative, Venezuela participated in the qualifying events and in the Pan Ams. In the case of Uruguay, this year they are considering acquiring Lightnings and starting to sail the class in their country.

In Ecuador, the second edition of "Sailing Week" will be held from September 24-28. We already have participation in the Lightning class from Chile and Colombia. It is a low-cost event; we can help by providing housing, no boat charter fees, and special prices for food at the club. Considering the master plan, the event organization will also make efforts to attract young teams, both local and international, so they can see the potential of the class.

This is while keeping the class at the forefront of the sailing world, which includes Scuttlebutt Sailing ads and social media.

### **Boat Grant Report: Greg Fisher**

The ILCA Boat Grant program has had another good fall/winter application/ acceptance program. 3 solid, talented, friendly teams have been selected from different parts of the country. All are enthusiastic college sailors and hopefully long-term Lightning class members.

- 1) Aiden Naughton, Marina Barzaghi, Kaleigh Morgan – Newport, RI
- 2) Ian Beckley, Noah Hallerman, Sophie Luster- Madison, WS      Mentor Bill Faude
- 3) Emma Hawko, Caitlin Derby, Kim Russell – Shelburne, VT

Emma may seem familiar as this is her third year as part of a BG team. She has crewed both times previously and even helped put together a great Boat Grant team to compete in the Worlds last fall. Emma is already a District Secretary in New England. We have plans for her on the committee too! Note that her team is all women....and that Aiden's teammates are women as well. With College sailors, in New England and the Midwest, and the number of women represented in this year's recipients – this is exactly what we hoped the Boat Grant program would deliver to our regattas and our membership.

Aiden and team will be sailing the Southern Circuit in 15619 and Emma will be crewing in St Pete and driving in Miami, thanks to CH Ritt! Please say hi to our BG sailors.

Equipment wise, we are again in a great position with all newer boats- 15619, 15475 and 15600 (a new purchase from George Scarborough in Charleston- who was very good to program in his support and pricing). 15406 will be reassigned back to the ILCA Fund to either be sold or to reignite the Legacy Program.

As far as sails, we were fortunate to receive new donated jibs from Brian at North last summer and have bought new Mains from North and spinnakers from Evolution....again at generous discounts.

Having great and competitive equipment has certainly encouraged top talented young college sailors to try our class out. All three teams plan to do the regional regattas and the North Americans at the BCC.

Our program is the epitome of what many classes want to do. In fact, Paul Cayard called last fall and asked how we do it. Interestingly enough, their Boat Grant recipient sailing the Bacardi Cup in Miami as we speak is a Lightning Boat Grant Alumni from Charleston.

And again, none of this would have been possible without the generosity of the class and our membership.

Speaking of generosity, we will be building a campaign around a match from the Brian Hughes Memorial fund, who many of us remember. The Boat Grant Program was offered this donation if we were able to generate matching funds. Fortunately, this has been achieved through the support of one generous family and as a result we have been able to add \$8400 towards the purchase of 15600.

We will officially kick off this campaign in St Pete and in future Flash Blasts and appreciate all our members can do to help us "match the match".

Thank you again to the class membership, our board and the executive committee who all make all the Program's success possible. Thank you!

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#### **Pan Am Games VP: Bill Faude**

The 2023 Pan American Games were a great success for the Lightning Class. 8 countries were represented. The racing was high quality and close with 7 of the 8 teams finishing in the top 5 at least once.

Venezuela, which has not consistently been a Lightning Country, sent a team, which is great news. Since the last games the Class office has heard of interest from Puerto Rico and Uruguay to purchase boats and begin sailing Lightnings with one of their objectives being to enter a team in the games.

The next Pan American Games are scheduled to be held July 2-18, 2027. The games are currently without a host location. Barranquilla Colombia was initially announced as the next host. However, the city was stripped of its hosting rights in January 2024 for various financial reasons. The capital cities of Paraguay (Asuncion...where the 2025 Junior Pan American Games will be held) and Peru (Lima...where the 2019 event was held) officially submitted their candidacies to become the Host City. On March 12, Panam Sports will hold an Extraordinary General Assembly where the 2027 Host City election will take place.

As new VP/Pan American Games, I am beginning to ask veteran members of the Pan Am Games community...including previous representatives of the Pan Am Games themselves and past VP Pan Ams for their perspective on what needs to be done. All suggestions are welcome.

Participating in the 2007 Pan Am Games in the Lightning was a highlight of my sailing live. I hope that having been on the ground at a games will help me be more effective in serving the Class in this role.

#### **European Championship: Lauri Hemming**

The Europeans will be held at sea in Kotka, Finland in August.

The race has received the official Finnish Championship and European Championship status from the Sailing Federation in Finland.

Kotka is a town with a strong maritime heritage and a big port on the Bay of Finland.

The registration is open to everyone at: <https://manage2sail.com/en-US?>

We have already 5 boats registered and expect a 20 + entries event with up to 4 GRE boats at this stage.