

# *Youth Movement in the Lightning Class and Junior Development*

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# Editor's Note



## *My Lightning Class Connection*

The theme of this yearbook has such a strong connection for me personally. When Rob Ruhlman told me it was going to be about the “Youth Movement in the Lightning Class” and “Junior Development,” I immediately thought about my own childhood sailing with my Dad, Jim Daley, and my siblings at Metedeconk River Yacht Club in New Jersey in Lightning 10988. Then it evolved into sailing with my husband, Ian, and two daughters, Lauren and Allie, as a family in Lightning 15298.

The Lightning Class, as we all know, is a family oriented Class. Like any sport or activity, if the parents are involved, the kids tend to embrace it as well. Although, at times we have had to enlist the help of other parents too! That has been easy because at the Buffalo Canoe Club, where I now sail, there is a very strong Lightning fleet with wonderful sailors who are always willing to teach the kids and embrace every part of nurturing the next generation of competitors.

Thanks to everyone for helping these kids along, not just at my club but, at all the clubs and fleets around the world. You will read a sampling of what goes on in the articles that follow. Let's keep it growing strong!

Thank you to Sherryl Egy our Yearbook designer. She is very talented, conscientious and patient! She is the one who laid out this book and thoughtfully put these pages together. Thank you, also, to our Class Secretary, Laura Jeffers. She kept us organized and moving along. Every yearbook project is a huge group effort, so thank you also to all the contributors who wrote articles and the proof readers! We all pulled this project off together.

*Monica Jones, Buffalo Canoe Club, Ontario, Canada*





# *The Young Sailor*

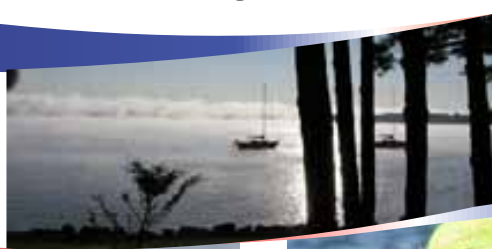


*You crawl, walk, then run  
You doggie paddle, face in, then swim  
You learn left from right, port from starboard  
You ride along, crew, then take the tiller  
You learn knots, rules, make mistakes  
You make friends, sail all day and have fun  
You learn to race, middle of the pack, top ten  
You tip over, get wet , try again  
Travel, meet people from different countries  
Break the boat, fix it, learn from mistakes  
The thrill of placing, taking the podium, the trophy  
The competitive spirit, wanting to go again  
Just having fun, friendships, family  
You grow, you flourish and sail for a lifetime.*

*Monica Jones*



# Pymatuning Yacht Club



For anyone who has ever been to Pymatuning, you know how special a place it is. I was fortunate enough to grow up there and even more fortunate to be a part of the Junior Sailing Program. While many programs focus on Optimists, 420s and Lasers, the PYC Junior Program is designed to get kids sailing and racing with the club in Lightnings and Thistles. Once kids reach the age where they are capable of listening and moving, and sometimes earlier, they are recruited to sail with members for the summer, or simply to hop on a boat for the day. It is a rare sight to see an able-bodied junior sailor on the lawn during racing—some may even say unacceptable.

While this may not seem very remarkable, the boats that these juniors “hop on” are very often the boats of blue-flight caliber sailors, many of whom have seen decorated success in the Class for years. So while other teams across

the world are practicing, the top sailors at PYC are coaching. They take time out of their own racing to pass along trimming pointers, tactical advice, and their invaluable experience. Yet not only do juniors crew for great sailors, they are also encouraged to sail against them. Club members are always excited to see juniors on the helm, and they never hesitate to offer on-the-water coaching or even their boat and sails. But don't try to start above them—there are no exceptions for juniors!

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of junior sailing at PYC is the opportunity to travel to other regattas—whether to Buffalo for their annual Youth Invitational or VJMs or Districts, it is often PYC juniors that do the most traveling, which is good because with the best Class in the world, everyone comes back more excited than ever.

*Katie Werley*





# Carlyle Sailing Association



Every club has its challenges for their respective junior programs, but many are able to modify the typical junior program prototype to fit their club. The struggle with developing a “typical” junior sailing program at Carlyle Sailing Association is the location of the lake relative to where the general membership resides. Carlyle is a good hour east of St. Louis, and farther for those who live in the western suburbs of St. Louis. Development on the Corp of Engineer-owned lake is prohibited, so owning a lake home is not an option. For some reason, the families who live close to the lake tend to have more of an interest in farming and fishing than sailing.

Since the mid 1980s, the club has hosted a one-week-long junior sailing camp. The children ten to sixteen years of age spend the night in tents at a campground near the club and sail during the day. Each child has their own boat, whether it be owned, borrowed, or leased from the club.

The camp was originally for Sunfish and Lasers but has changed to Optimists and Laser Radials. The camp is run by volunteers only, so the cost to attend the camp is very reasonable. There are limitations on what a child can learn about sailing in one-week time frame, but the camp facilitates friendships that keep some of the kids eager to endure the long drive to the lake each weekend for the rest of the season.

A few other junior program additions have been added within the last ten years. An Optimist “learn-to-sail” program was added within the last decade. Two hired instructors teach sailing basics to eight to thirteen year olds. The Optimist program usually consists of six to eight weekends and runs concurrently to the club’s one-design races on Sundays.

This program is challenged with the time between each lesson and the vast diversity of the age and skill of these entry-level kids. The small membership of the club results in inconsistencies in age, sex, and previous exposure to sailing of the upcoming juniors.

Sunday morning junior races started about ten years ago. Many small-course races are run by volunteers each Sunday morning during the summer months prior to the club’s one-design races. The junior races are sailed in Optimists and Laser Radials. The results are tallied all season long to promote participation and enthusiasm. The participation of the Sunday junior races tends to be primarily children of the active racers in the club. These kids then crew in the one-design club races with a parent or other adult.

The juniors from Carlyle Sailing Association who end up actively crewing with adults tend to be the juniors who stick to sailing into their own adulthood. The greatest success that Carlyle Sailing Association has had with the junior sailors stems from the families who go to the lake every weekend. It takes commitment from all members of the family to pack up the car, schedule around or miss other activities going on in St. Louis, and simply sail on the weekends. The children who are part of the committed sailing families ultimately learn the most by simply “crewing for Dad” each and every weekend, six months of the year.

*Tobi Moriarty*





# Buffalo Canoe Club



Joy MacDonald



An important aspect in ensuring that a sailing class has longevity is getting kids involved. The Buffalo Canoe Club, Fleet 12, has certainly taken on an incredible initiative to promote youth Lightning sailing. The BCC is the home club of many world-class sailors, and, therefore, has a very strong Lightning fleet. On any given Tuesday night in the summer, we will have as many as twenty boats out for a fleet race! In 2006, my dad, Larry MacDonald, was voted onto the BCC Board of Directors as Junior Activities Director. In his five years as director, he has effectively transformed the youth sailing program and made it unbelievably successful. A cornerstone for the program is helping young sailors grow through our junior program and become sailors for life.

In this regard, Lightnings are the perfect boat to help get juniors involved in a fun and competitive sailing atmosphere that they can be part of for many years to come. In 2007, the BCC sent Connor Godfrey, John-Henry Ring, my brother Adam MacDonald, Maddie Waldron, Kathryn Moloney and myself to the Junior North Americans in Leesylvania, Virginia, and this helped to get some juniors interested and excited for the next summer. In 2008, the BCC started the Junior Lightning Team with five boats who would be sailing in the Junior NAs in Newport, Rhode Island. Also, that year, the BCC had three boats at the Youth Worlds in Montreal. Since then, the Junior Lightning Team has grown exponentially! Thanks to world-class coaches and mentors such as Jody and David Starck, Ian Jones, Debbie Probst, Kevin Robinson, Tom Allen, Peter Godfrey and Larry MacDonald, the team has always been fortunate to be learning from the best.

The great thing about the Lightning Class and the BCC is the sense of family and community. The Junior Lightning Team has become a solid unit, and we all push each other to become better, whether we are speed testing upwind or practicing starts over, and over again. Through the great support we have from our parents and from the BCC junior sailing program, sailing has become a passion for all of us. As the summers passed, the team continued to grow and include younger members. Those interested in joining were put into teams with other interested youths. Also, if a team was in need of a boat, club members were often very generous in lending their boats out for regattas. In 2009, we sent six boats to the Junior North Americans in Sodus Point, New York. Members of the BCC team ended up achieving the top two spots: winners Connor Godfrey, Griffin Orr and John Henry Ring



Youth Invitational—2007



Youth Invitational—2008



# Buffalo Canoe Club



and runners up Connor Mangan, Lauren Jones and Jeffrey Markarian. Those two boats qualified for Team USA for the Youth World's in Ecuador the next summer. Additionally, Adam and I qualified for Team Canada.

The summer of 2010 was quite a busy summer at the BCC, but it was definitely one of the most successful for the Junior Lightning Team. With four boats preparing for Youth Worlds in Ecuador and seven boats training for the Junior North Americans in New Jersey, there was limited time to get everybody prepared. However, our amazing mentors helped train us in every way possible. Before heading off to Ecuador, other than spending countless hours out on the water, our team was skilled in boat preparation onshore and we were also knowledgeable about travelling overseas. Ian Jones and Jody Starck shared their own stories about sailing in South America, and, let me tell you, not one of us drank the water! When we finally got to Ecuador, our teams were respectful of the borrowed boats, and we really meshed together as a team and helped each other master the challenging conditions. The regatta was a great experience, and I know that many members of the team have set their sights on qualifying for the Finland 2012 Youth Worlds at this year's Junior NAs. Soon after we returned from Ecuador, it was off to the Metedeconk River Yacht Club in Brick, New Jersey, for the Juniors'. After some very windy conditions, our teams came out on top once again. The winners (although with a New Jersey skipper, Timmy Crann) Lauren Jones and Jeffrey Markarian sailed an amazing regatta, and Connor Godfrey finished a solid second place. This summer the Youth Lightning Team is excited for North Cape and is looking forward to some great training and practicing at the Buffalo Canoe Club!

In order to foster the interest of younger junior sailors, every Tuesday afternoon the junior sailing racing class went out on Lightnings with club members to sail in some practice races. The Buffalo Canoe Club is fortunate to have many adult Lightning sailors who have always been eager to get juniors involved in Lightning sailing. For Tuesday night racing, kids would wait around after sailing class and hop on any boat that was in need of crew. Also last summer, after racing every Tuesday night, Debbie Probst ran a rules seminar, and she would meet with the youth who sailed that night and go over some of the situations that may have arisen. At the BCC we have always aimed to produce youth sailors that are educated about the rules and who pride sportsmanship before results.

On many weekends throughout the summer the BCC hosts youth oriented regattas. First, there is the Sean Gregory Memorial Regatta, which is always a great event. Dozens of kids, some very young, show up on a Saturday morning and are piled into boats with more than willing adults. Then there is the annual Pro-Am regatta in which two youth sail with one adult, and each person skips one race. These events always conclude with a fun barbeque and awards for everyone—the best part! The Youth Invitational is a regatta that started about five years ago, and it is always the weekend right before the Junior NAs. Up to twenty boats from many different clubs sail in this two-day regatta in either all junior teams or pro-am style teams with a junior skippering. The Youth Invitational has become wildly successful and is a great opportunity to get kids involved and to help with youth development. After Saturday racing David Starck has given a seminar talking about what he saw out on the water that day. Also, there is always a BCC coach on the water coming up to boats and giving them pointers.



Youth Invitational—2009

Connor Godfrey, Griffin Orr, John Ring—2009



# Buffalo Canoe Club



The BCC has also started its own Lightning Boat Grant that is now in its third year. Sailors who are interested apply throughout the winter and must include references in order to be considered. The first winner of the boat grant in 2009 was Connor Mangan with his team Lauren Jones and Jeffrey Markarian. In 2010 and 2011 the boat grant has been received by Christine Moloney and her team Kayla Oak and Julianne MacDonald.

Overall, the Buffalo Canoe Club truly is an amazing place to sail. I have been extremely lucky to grow up as a youth sailor there and to be surrounded by so many wonderful sailors who have made me absolutely love the sport. When I was ten years old my dad and Kevin Robinson took me to my first ever Lightning NAs in North Cape. Now ten years later, I see the youth program that has grown at the BCC thanks to the enthusiasm of my dad and so many others. I love seeing a new generation of Lightning sailors grow up at the Buffalo Canoe Club, and I am incredibly grateful to be a part of the Lightning Class family!

*Joy MacDonald*



Julianne MacDonald climbing the mast to retrieve a halyard



Youth Invitational—2009



Youth Invitational—2010



# *NA Juniors' Championship*



It was the summer of 2010 when there were thirty kids packing up and preparing ten boats to be transported to Metedeconk River Yacht Club in New Jersey for the Junior Lightning North Americans. The Lightning North Americans is a sailing regatta hosted every year in a different city. If you compete in the North Americans and you rank in the top three, you can move forward and qualify for the Lightning Worlds in Ecuador. I was fortunate enough to be one of those thirty kids. Little did I know that I would be forced to persevere over stiff competition, weather conditions and an injury. This memory taught me the importance of having fun.

In 2010 I was part of the Junior NAs. It was my very first time ever to sail in a Lightning boat. There were all new boat parts and colored lines that were all very confusing to me. My partners were Becky Scanlon and Jeff Scanlon.

Becky was the skipper, also known as the driver of the boat. Jeff was the bow person, the one who pulls the jib sail in and out and sets the pole for the spinnaker going downwind. As for me, I was the middle person. My job was to fly the spinnaker, keeping it full at all cost going down wind. Then, I would have to very quickly do the "take down" or take the spinnaker down as fast as I could while the skipper sailed up wind. Also, I had to hike out and keep the boat as flat as possible. That is very hard to do when it is very windy. Lastly, I was the talker on the boat. I would tell my skipper everything that was going on around us and on the course. I would talk about puffs on the water, boats tacking or coming about, and where we were placed. I had to be well aware of everything.

It was the morning that we headed off to New Jersey. I was so excited I couldn't sleep at all that night. I was traveling with the Jones family. I was going with them because my family was not going. It was 5:40 AM, and we were all packed up. The car was filled with movies, pillows, candy and blankets and a trunk full of sailing gear. The car ride was seven hours long. Mrs. Jones had family that lived in New Jersey, so she really knew her way around. We were getting closer to our destination and had to drop off the boats at the yacht club and rig them for the morning's races.

When all the boats were set up and ready to compete, we went to Mrs. Jones' parents house where we were staying. We had a full house, and it was so much fun. That night we had a barbeque overlooking the ocean and enjoyed the summer breeze. After dinner we played baseball and night games. It was getting late so we decided to get a good night's sleep and head to bed. In my room we had three people, Allie, Lauren, and myself.





# *N A Juniors' Championship*



At 6:45 AM we got up and were all rushing to get out the door. We got registered and were on the water by 7:30 AM. We got towed out to the race course, which was a fifteen-minute ride out. We went under a huge gray bridge called the Mantoloking Bridge. Cars were all stopped as the bridge opened so we could sail under so that our masts would not hit.

We were out on the water all day long. We got in about eight races for the first day of sailing. It was crazy windy, boats flying past each other trying to avoid collisions, boats were tipped over, and there was even occasional chaos. We were lucky enough to hold our boat down and not tip, but we had other problems. We smashed into a boat and took off their corner, we broke the guy hook for the spinnaker pole and we were all so cold.

After the first day of racing we sailed back to the yacht club and decided we wanted to go to a water park. We had two cars and a bunch of people piled in. People were sitting on laps, double buckled, and the music was rocking. We arrived at the water park at 5:00 PM. It was the biggest water park I've ever seen.

When we were done, we headed back home and went to the neighbor's house to play Pictionary. We had four teams with three players in each team. It was a blast, people screaming out answers, laughing, and making fun of funny pictures. We knew we had to cut the night short because we had an important day ahead of us. It was the last day of racing and we had an awards banquet to follow.





# *N A Juniors' Championship*



We went to bed and got up really early and had our last breakfast at the Jones' house. We were back on the water at 8:00 AM and started racing at 8:30 AM. We only got in four races because it was so windy. It was much windier than the day before. We tipped over and were all wet and cold—not the ideal conditions to be ending the day.

It was the last race of the regatta. In spite of the fact that it was cold, we gave it our all. We were at the starting line waiting for the gunshot to start the sequence. BANG! Three minutes to the start. People were sailing back and forth along the starting line trying to avoid hitting each other. The wind picked up and now there were huge salty waves crashing over our boat.

The course we had to sail was a “up wind down wind 5,” which means we would have to sail up and down wind five times and then cross the finish line. BANG! One minute, thirty seconds left. Everyone was inching up to the start line. Boats were getting closer and closer together. BANG! One minute to go. We were in irons with both sails let out, not moving, and trying to hold our place waiting for the time to run out.

BANG! That was the start, and the race was on. We crossed the line, pulled in our sails, and all we were thinking about was speed. We were on the second leg of the race when all of a sudden crash! A 500-pound metal centerboard crashed onto my pointer finger.





# *NA Juniors' Championship*



I was crying, blood was everywhere, and boats were bearing down on us. I told Becky to sail over to our coach because I needed help. Becky said, "No we have to finish this race, it's the last one." I said, "Fine, let's do it!" I was no longer much help, but I did my best to hold it together. We were on the final leg of the race, and the finish line was in sight. We came in fifth place, which was amazing for that race.

Right after we passed the finish line they rushed me over to my coach's boat. They got me out of the boat,

where my coach's mom was there to comfort me. They looked at my finger and didn't think I needed to go to the hospital, but they rushed me back to the yacht club to see the nurse.

As we were heading in, there was a huge thunderstorm. We had to turn around and help all the boats get in as fast as we could. My finger was throbbing and pulsing as we waited for the boats to get tied together and towed in. When we got to shore they rushed me to the office. The nurse looked at my finger, and it had split right open. She called the hospital, and Mrs. Jones took me right in. I was glad it was Mrs. Jones because she is like my second mother.

Meanwhile, we had an hour and a half to get to the awards banquet. As we sat in the waiting room someone finally took us in. It turned out that I had a fracture and needed stitches. So as fast as the doctor could, he gave me two stitches, wrapped my finger in a cast, and gave me a sling. I remember I was still wearing all my sailing gear and had salt all over my skin from the ocean. A definite shower was needed before the party.

We made it to the banquet just in time. As we listened for our names called and what place we came in, everyone asked me if I was okay and feeling better. We were finally called up and were awarded 15th place out of eighteen boats. It didn't matter where we had placed because we were the youngest team to compete. We had an injury, and all we wanted to do was just have fun. This is a memory I will never forget. I overcame great obstacles, under extreme circumstances, and had one of the best times of my life!

*Emily Markarian*





# Pontiac Yacht Club



In the Michigan District we have been pushing the junior movement hard in the last couple of years. Pontiac Yacht Club has a successful and growing junior program. It is the hope that this will foster the future of Lightning sailing at the club as well as represent it at the US Sailing and local junior events. The Club uses Optimis, Open Bics, 420s, Lasers, Flying Juniors and Lightnings to teach the kids. The program is broken into two parts. One is instructional, and the other is the racing team. Pontiac holds one major junior event each year that attracts about 100 kids and their boats to the club. Pontiac most recently sent a team to the Sears Cup finals in San Diego last year. The event was sailed in Lightnings.

Pontiac has started its own version of the ILCA Boat Grant Program called the Junior Mentor Boat Grant. The recipient will have the use of a Lightning for the summer at PYC and any sanctioned Lightning event. The designee will help mentor a junior team as well as help with maintaining boats in the junior program.

The Michigan district has changed its Junior Districts this year to try and foster more junior participation. The Bay City Yacht Club will be hosting the event that will allow each junior boat to have one non-junior crew. This person is supposed to be an owner or mentor. The hope is that more people will be willing to lend their boat and that it will get some kids out there that may just not be ready without some help. A number of the local Bay City Lightning Fleet members also help teach in the Saginaw Bay Community Sailing Association.

North Cape Yacht Club and Crescent Sail Yacht Club also have large and successful junior sailing programs. Both programs have produced top Lightning sailors and continue their fine tradition.

Three junior sailors, Nick Harris (skipper), Josh Abbott (middle), and Elise Hess (foredeck), from PYC made history by being the first junior race team from PYC to advance to the national championship of the Sears Cup. Mission Bay Yacht Club in San Diego hosted eleven teams who had won their semi-finals in their respective region throughout the entire U.S. The following article from Nick Harris describes their experience:

*Sunday, August 15, we arrived around 11:00 o'clock San Diego time. Our host mom, Mrs. Magill, picked us up at the airport, took us back to her house and then on to MBYC. The yacht club was really nice, and it was a great sailing venue. Since we were sailing in Sail Bay, there were no power boats. After we checked in, there was a Lightning clinic that lasted the rest of the day with some practice races at the end. The host family that we stayed with was very nice and they were happy to have us there. They even supplied us with surf boards to go surfing during our free time.*

*Monday was the first day of racing and it was very light. At the end of the day we were sitting in 6th (we were pretty happy about that). On Tuesday, the wind picked up to about 8-10 knots and we struggled a bit finishing in 8th at the end of the day. Wednesday was pretty heavy wind, at least for our 400 pound crew, since it was blowing a steady 12-15 with gusts probably hitting 17. We only had two races on Wednesday and we did poorly in both dropping to 9th. Though we were disappointed in our results, we all had a great time and we all learned a lot. We would like to thank PSEF and PYC youth sailing program for the financial support which made the trip possible. We were very grateful to represent PYC and DRYA.*

Jim Allen



# Finland



We all know that a boat class needs new sailors to stay alive. And juniors are the very best new sailors it is possible to have. How to handle this for a boat class is an important question.

Too many boats and skippers have been sailed without regular crew members in Finland. If a Lightning skipper needed crew members for a certain regatta, it was typical to pick up a young sailor with some experience from another boat class, like Europe or Optimist dinghy. It was possible to sail a regatta with ad hoc crew, but the young sailors do not like to go on with Lightning because there are no plans for the future—no way to become a better crew member or a skipper. That was the way Finnish crews were built for the 2006 ILCA Youth Worlds in Jyväskylä, and the results were not good.

After Jyväskylä Youth Worlds the young sailors have been given a possibility to become a better crew member or a skipper. With an experienced Lightning sailor in the middle, it has been possible to train one young crew member and one young skipper. This was, of course, better than before, but it did not result in new youth crews.

In September 2010 Mr. Kimmo Aromaa came to our Sailing Club in Järvenpää with information that the 2012 ILCA Youth Worlds would be organized in Europe. The problem of missing youth crews was discussed. We found out that there was not a single regular Lightning youth crew in Finland. Finally, we all agreed that we would start a training program for 2012 ILCA Youth Worlds.

In December 2010 we learned that the 2012 ILCA Youth Worlds would be organized by Sailing Club Tuusulanjärven Purjehtijat (Tuusula Lake Sailors). The training program started with lessons in January because we had winter and it was not possible to sail in Finland because of ice and snow. Thirteen young sailors heard our call and started to plug and made a promise to start training. During the winter period we had six lessons, individual physical training and some homework as well.

Summertime is reserved for practical training and racing. There will be special Lightning training for youth crews once a week. That does not sound like much, but, in addition, there are weekly club races, Lightning ranking series, regattas in other boat classes and training for other boat classes, so it is difficult to find more time for special Lightning training.

After the summer period we are going to start with theoretical lessons and physical training again, and after winter there will be some time for practical training.

We hope it is possible to represent four regular youth crews in 2012 ILCA Youth Worlds in Järvenpää. And we know that our training program is going to make it more possible to keep the Lightning as a living class in Finland.

Our training crew consists of four individuals on a voluntary basis—Mr. Kimmo Aromaa, chief trainer, Mr. Sakari Pesola, assistant trainer, Mr. Timo Jalkanen, physical training and nutrition and the author as coordinator.

*Erik Hartman*



Rosemarie Hartman, skipper, Pirita Aromaa, 15, and Paulus Saari, 15, in a Club Race in Tuusula Lake Venue of 2012 Youth Worlds



# Chile



We hosted the Cofradia Nautica del Pacifico Race in February, 2010. This race was meant to promote junior sailing in our region. The owner of the boat had to be present but could not skipper. We hope to plan the race again because it was very successful. Most of the kids had never sailed a Lightning before, and it was a great introduction to the boat. Several of those kids are sailing with the owners continuously because of the success of this race. We also have several families proactively sailing, three boats out of fourteen, and racing with their children.

Alberto Gonzalez had a friend that followed him in the first race, but they didn't have a very good finish. They placed fourth or fifth in the last race. He followed his opponents to the finish and told them they were in first place! They enjoyed the day and learned a lot about racing.

*Tito Gonzalez Mas/Alberto Gonzalez*

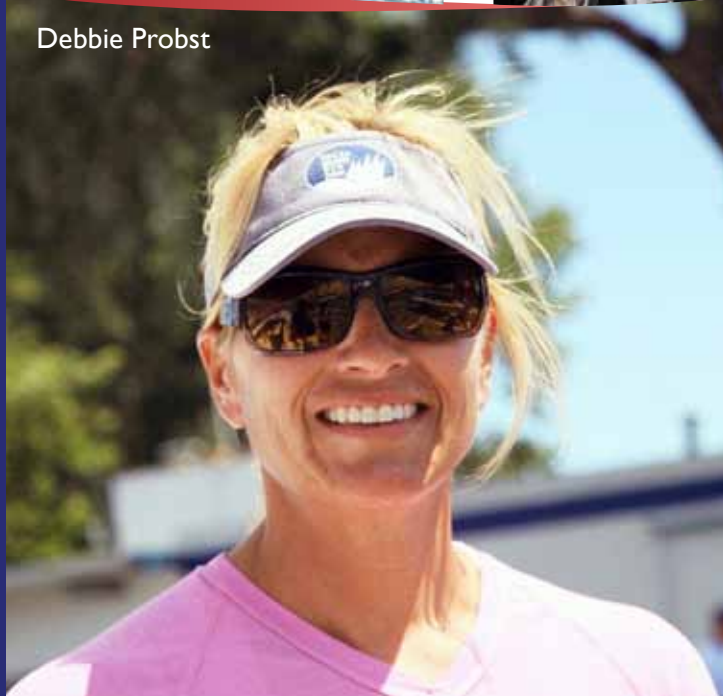




# Boat Grant Program



Debbie Probst



“Thinking Outside the Box” best describes the origination of the Lightning Boat Grant Program in 2007. For starters, it was the brainstorm of Bill Fastiggi and Allan Terhune. Fastiggi is the owner of Vermont Sailing Partners while Terhune is a dedicated North Sails One Design employee. These two “rivals” put their heads together and created the Boat Grant Program as a way to share the Lightning Class with younger sailors. Primarily a marketing program, it has quickly grown to be much more.

Throughout its four year existence, eighteen teams have had the unique experience of racing a nearly new Lightning for a summer at virtually no cost. Each team is granted a boat for the summer sailing season, along with practice

and racing sails, reimbursement for insurance, regatta fees and a good portion of their fuel costs. Perhaps of greater value is the access these young sailors have had to the intense competition, heartfelt camaraderie and overwhelming support the Lightning Class offers.

From sixteen-year-old Collin Kirby, who was granted a non-traditional “developmental grant” of an older boat, to twenty-five-year-old Rob Linden, we have had the pleasure of introducing a wide age range of younger sailors to the Lightning. What a great testament to our Class that four of these “Boat Grant Alums” are now boat owners, with quite a few more continuing to participate in the Class in various capacities.

Junior sailors around the country recognize their local “rock stars,” and it is increasingly common that these idols are sailing Lightnings through the Boat Grant Program, by borrowing a local boat or by using a family boat. The Boat Grant Program is visible, attracts the youth, and is something our Class has rallied around. First year recipient Bob King and current Boat Grant Selection Committee Member said:

*“As a recipient, you will begin to notice that you have instantly become somewhat of a celebrity within the Lightning community, even within the sailing community at large. You will find more people wanting to introduce themselves to you at all of the events that you attend. Former strangers to you will be eager to hear of all your sailing experiences. We have a good feeling that you will be astonished by the overwhelming support and encouragement that you will receive.”*





# Boat Grant Program



The current Co-chairpersons of this program, Bill Fastiggi and Debbie Probst, would like to recognize the incredible generosity of Allen Boat Company, Nickels Boat Works, Dieball Sails, North Sails, and Vermont Sailing Partners for their support. Additionally there are many, many Class members who have been quick to help with mentoring, driving, logistics, manpower and funding. It's no wonder the Boat Grants are so sought after—we have a great Class!!

Debbie Probst

## *Notable Kids Quote!*

At the 2009 North Americans in Sodus Bay, I was sailing with two of my kids, Abbie (12 years) and Tanner (10 years). We barely squeaked into the Blue Fleet, and with an eight-knot breeze in the first race, it was a spectacular first-mark scene with all thirty-three boats arriving within one hundred yards of each other. Total chaos—everyone sailing within inches of each other, ducking, tacking, collisions, penalty turns, shouting, boats hitting the mark, adrenalin flowing. After we got the spinnaker up, Tanner turned around with eyes wide with excitement and said “Wow, mom, is it always like that???”

Debbie Probst

