

# International Lightning Class Association

*President*  
BRIAN W. HAYES, SR.  
896 Wheeler's Farm's Road  
Milford CT 06461 USA  
President@LightningClass.org

*Chief Measurer*  
BILL CLAUSEN  
RR#1 Box 1494 Beagle Run Road  
Saylorsburg PA 18353 USA  
Measurer@LightningClass.org

*Secretary*  
ROBERT RUHLMAN  
13211 Lake Shore Blvd  
Bratenahl, OH 44108 USA  
Secretary@LightningClass.org

*Treasurer*  
JOHN FAUS  
PO Box 657  
Rocky Hill, NJ 08553  
Treasurer@LightningClass.org

## PRESS RELEASE — For Immediate Distribution

International Lightning Boat Grant Program Enters Fourth Year.

Centennial, CO — How can a 70-year-old one-design class keep attracting young sailors — despite an economic downturn and the myriad other leisure attractions that lure sailors off the water? The short answer: make it easier. For the International Lightning Class Association, an innovative Boat Grant program has been doing just that since 2007. “Here in North America,” explained class president Brian Hayes, “We’ve been able to provide fully race-ready boats to fifteen young skippers so far. The long-term benefits are super: we’ve had several Boat Grant skippers purchase boats after their Boat-Grant years, and we are seeing a lot of new young sailors at all the major regattas.”

“It’s terrific to see the kind of widespread support the program has fostered in the class,” said Debbie Probst, one of the ILCA Vice-Presidents of the Boat Grant program. “This year, Terry Kohler of Windway Corporation in Sheboygan, WI, generously donated six new suits of sails for the program. Allen Boat Company and Nickels Boat Works have provided the use of new boats. Sailmakers North, Vermont Sailing Partners, Dieball Sailing, and Quantum have all supplied sails and equipment and expertise. We have volunteer mentors and housing hosts, and many of the top sailors in the class have helped the young teams learn about rig tuning and boat speed.”

The ILCA board is 100% behind the boat grant program and plans to keep it in place for the foreseeable future. According to class Treasurer John Faus, “It just makes sense for us to keep the program running and to keep the fleet current — which is why we upgraded this year by selling one of our boats and replacing it with a brand new boat. We want to make sure the teams are able to compete at the top level to get the most out of the program.”

“It’s a win-win for the class,” according to program co-founder Bill Fastiggi. “The membership has really gotten behind the program. We are seeing strong young competitors like Justin Coplan deciding to stay in the Lightning [Coplan was granted a boat in 2008, and won a race during the 2009 World Championship], we are seeing talented Grant-team crew return to sail with long-time skippers. Each year the pool of applicants gets better and better.”

Seventeen teams from the U.S. and Canada have applied for the three boats available for this year. The recipients for 2010 will be announced in early March, in advance of the Lightning Southern Circuit. Applications for the 2011 season will be available next autumn on the ILCA website <http://www.lightningclass.org/>

The International Lightning, a 19-foot sloop designed by Sparkman & Stephens in 1938, can be found in North and South America, Europe, Africa, and Australia. Class alumni include Carl Eichenlaub, 470 Olympic team of Amanda Clark and Sarah Mergenthaler, Bill Shore, Tito Gonzalez, Rolex Yachtswomen Jody (Swanson) Starck, Betsy Alison, and Bonnie Shore, Rolex Yachtsmen Ken Read, Dave Curtis, Dennis Conner, Jeff Linton, and ISAF Sailor of the Year Ed Baird -- many of whom got their start in the Lightning sailing with friends and family.