**North American Rear Commodore’s Report 2013**

In March, 2015, Davis Island Yacht Club will hold the 50th Anniversary Fireball Midwinter Regatta. This is extraordinary support for our class through the decades, and with a combination week with the U.S. Fireball Nationals will be an attractive opportunity for overseas visitors to join us for spring training and competition.

Cascade Locks, Oregon, has hosted Fireball racing annually for the past five years at the CGOD regatta. This year CGRA hosted the Tasar Class World Championship , and notable Fireballers Heather Macfarlane, Chris Payne, and Julian Hannabuss were racing. We were parked next to an English group who had three Tasars delivered from Southampton to Tacoma in a very neat three boat trailer which was shipped roll-on roll-off. This might be an interesting idea for the Technical Committee to pursue when the ten boat container design is finished.

The North American Fireball fleet is actually composed of a group of scattered fleets with considerable distances between groups. “Adjacent” fleets are separated by 2-8 driving hours and generally only compete together a couple times per year. Our development is therefore very dependent on local fleet enthusiasm and recruitment. We have inquiries every year in North America from prospective amateur builders but have not had updated plans and “wide-bow” instructions available. Greg Desilets in Portland has completed a very nice wooden boat to replace his previous Fireball, and has computer files and a jig comparable to the Quebec Association’s Blanco system. I think it would be useful for the Technical Committee to review this as an opportunity to assist us with growth in North America.

2013 has seen a respectable series of regattas this year with the Tampa Midwinters attracting Fireballs from all four corners of North America, and a good fleet at Pymatuning, Ohio, for the U.S. Nationals. CGOD at Cascade Locks, had ten boats and was notable in that all of the boats were of the wide-bow shape. Fireballs returned to Kingston for the NA Championship, and the Canadian Nationals were held in Squamish, B.C. , a windsurfing mecca between Vancouver and Whistler. The standard of racing which I have observed has improved over the last seven years since the 2006 World’s in Victoria, and we have good potential for fleet-building in two or three areas, with fine boats available for sale at reasonable prices.

We have had five new(ish) boats measured this spring and one remaining to be done, depending on logistics. We have the last batch of boats imported after the 2010 World’s in Barbados being sailed competitively in Eastern Canada. We have pursued efforts to recruit a younger generation of sailors to our fleets and are presenting attractive fleets at our major regattas, with some loaner boats available.

The FI Executive has been concentrating on a couple of issues. The boat measurement is relatively stable with a forthcoming reduction of total weight by 3 kg; I argued against this for the past fifteen years in order to preserve our ability to have competitive amateur-built boats, but I think it will be possible to keep to 170 pound hulls with care and experience. Tom Egli has a project to adjust our sail measurement rules to conform to ISAF techniques without changing our actual sailplan.

I would like to thank Peter Wirth for his time and enthusiasm as USIFA President, and welcome Clay Poulson who has been sailing worldwide and is promoting Fireball in Phoenix, Arizona. Thanks also to Pierre Carpentier and Mike McEvoy for work with the CFA.

Robert Thompson