



HONORARY COMMODORE'S REPORT 2011

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2011 ushered in a new era for the Canadian Wayfarer Association. That transition to the new era had two key aspects, the first of which was the loss of our much loved George Blanchard, one of the pillars not only of CWA but also the TS&CC and Canadian sailing as a community. We will all miss George's personality, enthusiasm and stories (who else do we know that could talk about sailing adventures on Lake Ontario in 1932?). He will be a hard act to follow in all aspects.

The second item of significance was the introduction to Canada (and the USA) of the first five Hartley built Mark IV Wayfarers, "unveiled" at the North American championships at TS&CC. These are the first new Wayfarers to arrive on the North American scene since Abbot produced the last Mark 3 more than 6 years ago. The new design Wayfarers have created quite a stir in W circles and appear to have injected a new sense of enthusiasm in Wayfaring. On January 26 of this year, "Yachts & Yachting" declared the Wayfarer the 2010 Dinghy Class of the Year, a testament to the fresh look design and the growth of the class as a result of the new Mark IV training, cruising and racing models being produced by Hartley Boats.

As fine as the new Hartley Wayfarers appear to be, all of our Wayfarers, whether a 50+ year old Mark 1 "woodie" or a Mark 1, 2 or 3 of more recent vintage, are great sailing boats. What made them outstanding in the past will keep them relevant and loved in the future, whether we are going to race, cruise or playing with the kids at the cottage. These little "yachts", regardless of age, are beauties on the water.

We were very fortunate to have had a full slate of racing and cruising opportunities through the 2011 season. In addition to the well-organized and generally well-attended racing events on both sides of the border, ranging from Michigan in the west, Florida in the south and North Bay (in northern Ontario, of course), there were some very interesting cruises and cruise rallies. The Apostle Islands in Lake Superior proved to be a very remarkable venue for the "East meets West" rally even though the weather encountered was so good as to be almost "un-Superior" like. Others reported Maine being as beautiful as ever, a fantastic venue for this year's North American rally. One of the most fascinating long distance cruises came in the form of the "Tip of the Mitt" event that saw dinghy sailors, including our own Uncle Al and Gary Hirsch sailing W1321 *Solje* the hundreds of miles connecting Oscoda, on the shores of Lake Huron, up and around the top of Michigan and down the west side, on Lake Michigan, to Manistee. All of these demonstrate, however, that no matter how much fun we have in the boats, whether at a racing

or cruise event, we are completely dependent on volunteer organizers - we are most grateful for their efforts. Obviously, event participation helps us all reap the fruits of those "labours of love" by event organizers for the Wayfarer family.

2012 is shaping up to be a wonderful year. The plans for the North American cruise rally on the St. Lawrence River from Wellesley Island are well developed. Cruise and rally events are again being planned in western Canada on Lake Okanagan, the "East meets West" rally will likely be at a new venue in the Traverse City and Bay area, and there will be other cruising events to fill out the cruise enthusiast's summer.

In racing, 2012 must be looked at from the perspective that in 2013, our association, in conjunction with the USWA, will be hosting the "Worlds", returning here after nine years. That week of racing in August of 2004, when we last hosted the Wayfarer version of the World championships, saw more than 60 boats participating, including 18 crews from the UK, Ireland and Europe. Already, more than 18 months in advance, we are aware of 13 teams from the UK who are starting to plan their attendance – more will follow as the event comes closer. In addition, we can expect that a number of additional Hartley Wayfarers will become available both this year and next in time for the Worlds. George Blanchard would be thrilled, and he would also be telling all of us to make sure we use 2012 to maximum advantage by getting out to race and get that valuable time and experience on the water prior to the Worlds.

And so we should! Whether that means sailing at Fanshawe, Conestoga, Mississauga, Toronto or North Bay, sites in Michigan or winter retreats in Florida, there is a large slate of choices. Of course, we extend a hearty invitation to all to join us here in North Bay for our four days of events on the Canada Day weekend as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the North Bay Wayfarer Weekend. We would also love to see extra special attention paid to the North American championships to be hosted by the Mississauga Sailing Club in early August – this will be a practice for the club itself as it prepares to be the host venue for the 2013 Worlds. The more boats we get to MSC in 2012, the better practice everyone will have in preparation for the big event. How else do we learn about those Lake Ontario currents George talked about?

Our best to everyone as we wrap up 2011 and head into 2012.

Dave and Carol