

# West Wind

The Newsletter of the NZ Zephyr Owners' Association

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June 2000

## EDITORIAL

In his column opposite, Alex Aitken asks *where do we go from here?* Those of you who read this editorial will know that I refer occasionally to other sailing publications. For this editorial, partly because it goes some way to answering Alex's question, I have summarised an address by Tim Coventry titled "Presentation to ISAF Evaluation Event Seminar". Presumably the occasion was an ISAF review of potential future Olympic classes. Coventry is the owner of Performance Sailcraft, the company that makes the Lasers. The full version of his address can be found on the ISAF web site, ([www.sailing.org/makingwaves56/coventry.html](http://www.sailing.org/makingwaves56/coventry.html)). It was drawn to my attention by Jim Park, and I thought it may interest Zephyr owners.

Coventry expressed concern about the role of the Olympic movement, and what he calls the "Battle of the Classes". He laments the steady and relentless decline in the number of people actively involved in the sport of racing small boats. He suggests that *we are witnessing a disaster, a slow, inexorable degeneration, a gentle, but progressive, slide of sailing into obscurity. "The sport of racing dinghies is imploding. Every year it is more refined, (but smaller), more elitist, (but smaller), more specialised, (but smaller), more technical, (but smaller), more expensive, (but smaller). It may even in some cases be more televisual, but it's smaller! The sailing market is bombarded with new boats – good products, some of them great products. But in the main these new boats don't sell to new customers. It's the same customers class hopping to the new experience. The traditional classes have now been overwhelmed by small groups of new classes in more modern boats that do more things and go faster. The builders compete with each other for market sectors that are becoming so close that they obscure each other. Significantly, what is happening here in the active dinghy sailing population is that strong social groups are divided, new alliances created, the active group is changed to more groups with fewer in each group"*.

The emphasis, Coventry argues, should be on the class - *a community of like minded people and without this community it (sailing) has no core, no substance, no resilience*". His explanation for the enduring success of the Laser, 420, Opti (or P, Starling) is that *"it's not the equipment, it's not the radical or modern design, it's the community. It is the group of like minded people with a common objective. It's because these communities have momentum and energy and constantly re-generate themselves. "The community" is the key factor. The equipment is almost irrelevant once the community gets to a critical mass. It is "The Communities" that are the fragile core of what is left of the sport of dinghy racing.*

Coventry is critical of the Olympic movement *"the Olympics are important ... but they are not so important that everything should be subordinated to their needs. We should learn to balance the needs of the Olympics with the interests of our communities, find strategies to use the Olympics to make existing communities stronger and take care that in our haste to present an attractive shop window we do not damage the core of our sport. When classes cease to be Olympic, they die. Only a small active group of sailors (maybe no more than 100 to 200) make up the Olympic squads of the World. They move off to the new Class and what is left is equipment that has no value.*

(Continued on page 2)

## FROM THE PEN OF ALEX AITKEN National President



Inside this issue you will find my Annual Report for what for me has been another successful year for the Association. In this column though, I want to ask the question, *where do we go from here?*

I think it's about time we considered what we need to do to attract more Zephyrs out on the water. Of the seventy-eight paid up members we seem to have a core of around forty active sailors in the three centres. When we look at the national boat register a large percentage of Zephyrs have not been on the water for a number of years. On the bright side, compared with other similar centre board classes we are holding our own, particularly in the southern region.

Another question that needs to be considered is what do you want to do with the accumulating ZOA funds. Your association needs to have reserves of around \$2500 for indemnity (we have no insurance cover) in the event of the Zephyr jig or cedar hull being destroyed. A possibility is that individual owner associations make written application to ZOA (Inc) for a grant. This would be made available from accumulated funds, deemed surplus at the end of each financial year. Bob Allen, our Auckland secretary, has suggested that ZOA members be given the opportunity to express their thoughts on a number of topics by way of a postal opinion poll.

We need a buyer for the new cedar hull that is on display in the loft at French Bay Boating Club. Price is not negotiable (\$2800.00) but terms and conditions of payment for completion including rigging could be discussed. Should we stop building new hulls? If so, we need to consider that the class will eventually die.

Both Rob Ebert and myself have (unofficially) pledged a five year term in office. According to the records this is end of year four. At the AGM, 31 May 2001, we **may/will** step down in favour of two new brooms. You as members have this year to come up with names.

To end on a positive note, another Zephyr has headed for Dunedin. *Sirocco, #178*, formerly of Christchurch, then Wellington, has been sold to Barry Elliot in Dunedin. It joins *Tui, #311*, and Bren Nelson in the deep south. We need another 2-3 boats for a nucleus in Otago waters and hopefully the Nationals in Timaru again will provide more impetus to the deep south.

**Alex Aitken**  
President

(Continued from page 1)

The Mistral Imco is the perfect one design but is totally ignored outside Olympics. When this is replaced by the Fun Board, it will instantly cease to exist. The 49er, represents a new bench mark in the sport of sailing. New technology, exciting, visually interesting, fast - everything that people should aspire to sail. It is easy to sail, but very difficult to sail fast. As a result it is now only sailed by a small elite community at the top International level. The advanced technology has meant advanced techniques, which require total dedication to learn, develop and hone. And thus, we create a "Super Community" who have special skills. If a faster, better two person, two trapeze design is selected, what will happen? What are the chances for the 49er? What will be left behind when this small elite "Super Community" has moved on to the new toy?

Of the Laser, Coventry says it brings to the Olympics a community, it creates virtuous pyramids within which 15 and 16 year olds can set their sights at the top and in the same system, the same "Community", they can rise to the highest level. The same equipment serves all and never changes. In the Laser World Championships in Mexico, 130 of the World's best sailors in the closest and cleanest sailing competition, recognised the winner as the best sailor — not the guy who had the best sail or mast or hull - the best sailor. When the equipment is the same there is nowhere to hide, no one to blame except yourself, the ultimate challenge.

How does this relate to the Zephyr class? We have a strict one design philosophy which is now arguably delivering the cheapest dinghy sailing in New Zealand. Rightly, there is no intention to alter that. Over the years the Zephyr community has survived and renewed itself, albeit with some critical periods along the way. New members join up, some stay only briefly, others for decades! Older hands, latterly Brian Smith and Murray Sargisson, disappear for years then turn up again!

Unfortunately there is no easy solution to getting more Zephyrs out on the water, otherwise we would all be doing it. In any situation, though, the easiest behaviour to change is our own. Sail your own boat regularly, preferably with other Zephyrs, and enjoy yourself.

### HAMILTON HAPPENINGS

The Hamilton Yacht Club wound up its season last month with a dinner and prize giving at the club house, suitably decorated for the occasion. Joey Allen, sewer man on NZL 60 was a popular and able guest speaker for a gathering of 75 or so people. The prize giving was shortly after the Coutts/Butterworth "defection" to the Swiss, so Joey was able to pass some comments in its likely effect on Team New Zealand and the defence. Joey seemed to genuinely enjoy the company of club sailors, commenting that the yachties he had been around in the last few days hadn't been smiling much!

Hamilton has had good fleets this season. Zephyrs have vied with Lasers for the numbers honours. About twenty eight or so Zephyrs turned up at some stage during the season, with regular fleets in the twenties. Winds have been light and fluky, even by Hamilton standards, and the closing regatta had to be abandoned through lack of wind.

Competition has been close with no one skipper dominating the placings. Graham Bridges took out the Club Champs narrowly

### WAIUKU WARBLINGS

The Zephyr fleet increased to five regular participants this year. Kevin McGee has moved on to selling boats, not sailing them, but he is progressively renovating his Zephyr.

The season has been remarkable for its light winds, to the delight of the lighter skippers who have left Mike O'Connell behind! He's reputed to be praying for lighter winds next season.

Gill McGee, Barbara O'Connell and Dave Gribble have been improving throughout the season, with Gill winning the cruising race, Dave the Memorial and Handicap races. Mike O'Connell took out the Spring series and Champs races, Keith Smith the Winter, Ice Breaker and Labour Weekend Series.

The Club is well with 50 boats on the water on occasions. Finn numbers are increasing, Lasers numbers have been down a bit, Zephyrs steady, Starlings, Ps, Optimists up and down.

**Keith Smith**

### AUCKLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999-2000

Overall	Name	Sail no.	Placings
1	Murray Sargisson	82	1,4,2,2,3
2	Daniel Jamieson	325	2,8,1,3,1
3	Bob Allen	188	3,3,3,4,2
4	Robin Dew	62	6,2,4,1,4
5	Don Waterer	175	pms,11,5,7,5
6	Alan Retter	1	8,5,6,5,6
7	Andrew Geddes	49	pms,1,10,6,10
8	Garth Naulls	171	4,6,11,9,8
9	Bob Still	195	7,7,7,8,9
10	Richard Waterer	120	5,12,8,10,11
11	Dennis Craig	184	pms,10,9,11,7
12	Russell Turner	255	9,9,12,12,12

from Roger Walker. Roger had not been beaten in the Club Champs for over a decade, and received a special award from a nostalgic Brian Smith. Brian has been back in his Zephyr this year too, but it seems to have affected his keeler sailing. The latest issue of the Waikato - Thames Yacht Squadron newsletter shows his Young 9.9 hard aground in the Tamaki Strait after the Waikato - Thames Salt Water Regatta prizegiving went on a bit long!

Most improved sailor went to Jim Brokenshire, a real late developer! His improved performance comes as a consequence of a sustained weight loss and exercise program. He is looking good and sailing better than ever — and threatening to do some work on his boat!

Peter Hutchinson heads into Hospital for a winter time (naturally) knee replacement soon, so we wish him a speedy return full to sailing fitness. With Peter about to join Ron Mackie, we may have the makings of a special section in the national championship!

**Rob Ebert**

# ZEPHYR OWNERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING French Bay Yacht Club Monday 3rd July at 1930hrs



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

June 1999 to May 2000

It was in August 1996 that a ZOA Annual General Meeting was held at the Christchurch Yacht Club. At that meeting a new executive was voted in to get the national association back on track. Since then we have been on a journey to strengthen the administration, increase our membership and tidy up the general well being of the class. A vote of thanks must go to Rob Ebert for all his efforts with the boat register, class rules, publishing and mailing the West Wind.

The past year has been a good one. For me the highlight was Tauranga where for the first time we had a truly national contest. It was held at a neutral venue and apart from the lack of wind there was a feeling that the Zephyr owners were enjoying the fellowship. The Tauranga Yacht Club are to be commended for the professional approach in running the contest. The social events, BBQs, and prize giving, went like clockwork. This past year seems to have focused on changes in boat ownership and parallel with that we have had a record turnover with the trading side of ZOA. Pleasing to see there are now two Zephyrs at Macandrew Bay, Dunedin, and the new cedar hull #255 is on the water at French Bay.

Canterbury has had a busy season with reasonable numbers at championship events, the Masters Games at Dunedin and a 40' container with 8 Zephyrs competed at the nationals. The Canterbury AGM and presentation of trophies on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May at the Forest Park Tavern was well attended. After ten years at the helm Richard Ineson is stepping down and Philip Gurnsey is taking over the reigns as president of CZOA. On behalf of the national association, I wish to say thanks to Richard for his skill in chairing meetings, organising club races and contests. Richard will still be there in the background and act as our ZOA auditor.

The Auckland fleet attracts about 12 entries at championship events and smaller numbers to regattas. There was a positive response with eight Zephyrs at Tauranga. Thanks to Dennis and Bob for holding the fleet together. Although not too far away, Waiuku has a small and active fleet but has not appeared at any Auckland events this season.

The Hamilton Zephyrs have had a good season on the lake. Fleet numbers on the water reflect the strength and competitiveness of the class. Rob keeps up a regular bulletin in the West Wind and it was pleasing to see a good fleet at the nationals.

I was pleased with the promotional pamphlets that Bob Allen organised, they have been well received.

Thanks for all your support this season.

**Alex Aitken**  
ZOA President.

## AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous meeting (*published in West Wind, September 1999*)
3. Matters arising from the previous meeting
4. President's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Budget and Subscriptions
7. Election of Officers
  - *Patron:* Noel May has agreed to stand for another term.
  - *President:* Alex Aitken has agreed to stand for another term.
  - *Secretary:* Rob Ebert has agreed to stand for another term.
  - *Treasurer:* Alex Aitken has agreed to carry on with this role.
  - *Auditor:* Richard Ineson (Richard is a ZOA member, but is not a signatory for ZOA accounts and has no financial input other than general accounting advice).
  - *Regional Representatives.* AZO, HAZO, CZOA.
8. General
  - Notice of Motion "That the ZOA President be allocated an honorarium of \$100 for services rendered". Moved R Ineson, seconded R Mackie at the CZOA AGM 14/5/00.
  - National Contest 2001 & 2002
  - ZOA Web Site
9. Social Half Hour

## CLASS HANDBOOKS

### Reminder

The ZOA compiled and updated its rules a couple of years ago. Any member that does not have a class handbook please contact me and I will send you one.

**Rob Ebert**

## 2001 NATIONAL ZEPHYR CHAMPIONSHIPS

*Preliminary*

### "NOTICE OF RACE"

**Organised by the Timaru Yacht Club in association  
with the Zephyr Owners Association**

The tentative dates for the contest will be Thursday 4th, to Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

*Note: Discussion at the 2000 Nationals indicated interest in Nelson as a possible venue. This option was explored, but the Nelson club is hosting a catamaran contest at the time we were interested in and could not accommodate us. Nelson remains a possibility for the future.*

<b>Zephyr Owners' Association</b>		
<i>Financial Report for year 1 June 1999 to 31 May 2000</i>		
<i>This report is an interim one and a full audited set of accounts will be presented at the AGM.</i>		
<b>TRADING INCOME</b>		
Sails	5899	
Spars and rigging	7046	
Cedar Hulls	nil	
		<b>12945</b>
less cost of sales		
Opening stock 1/6/99	4874	
Sails	6956	
Spars and rigging	5598	
Cedar Hulls	nil	
Administration costs	100	
	17528	
less closing stock 31/5/00	6010	<b>11518</b>
Net surplus		<b>1427</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>		
Income		
Donations	80	
Subscriptions	1305	
less subs paid 00/21	25	1280
Interest 50 and 51 a/c		100
National contest surplus		352
		<b>100</b>
Sundry		<b>1912</b>
Less expenses		
Bank charges	nil	
Engraving	nil	
Newsletter	343	
Postage & stationary	91	
Tolls & general	110	
less transfer to trading a/c	100	10
YNZ subscription		96
Travel - president		254
Meeting		49
Promotion & Development		382
National contest		78
Sundry		100
Honorarium - president		<u>100</u>
		<b>1503</b>
Net surplus admin	135	
Net surplus national contest	274	
Net surplus from trading	1427	
total surplus for year		<b>1836</b>
Accumulated funds 1999		10744
Add net surplus		1836
Accumulated funds 2000		<b>12663</b>

<b>Zephyr Owners' Association</b>		
<i>Suggested budget for 00/01</i>		
<b>INCOME</b>	00/01	99/00
Donations	70	80
Subscriptions	1390	1280
Interest	100	100
	<b>1560</b>	<b>1460</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Engraving	60	nil
Newsletters	400	343
Postage & stationary	120	91
Tolls & general	140	110
YNZ subscriptions	140	96
Travel - president	350	254
Meeting	50	49
Promotion - Development	200	343
	<b>1460</b>	<b>1286</b>

**Notes**

- Recommend that ZOA subs for 2000/2001 be held at \$15.00
- YNZ subs. There is a review being undertaken and we anticipate a substantial increase in affiliation fees.
- The question of making funds available from accumulated surplus may arise. If the association wishes to look at any proposal then I would consider an appropriate figure for distribution would be in the region of \$1000.00. Clearly defined guide-lines and policy would have to be in place.

**CURRENT ASSETS**

ASB bank account 50	3583	
ASB bank account 51	518	
ASB cheque account	618	
Stock on hand 31/5/00	6010	
		<b>10729</b>

**FIXED ASSETS**

Building moulds and patterns	2362	
less Royalties received	(400)	<b>1962</b>
		<b>12691</b>

**CONTACTING THE ZEPHYR OWNERS' ASSOCIATION****National President**

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Christchurch 4  
phone: 03 358 4600  
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email: a-a.aitken@clear.net.nz

**National Secretary**

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15 Gilbass Ave  
Hamilton  
phone: 07 838 9375  
fax: 07 838 9376  
email: ebertr@wave.co.nz

### **CANTERBURY CAPERS**

Well it's the end of another season and to be honest it seems a long time ago when it started. My memories of the season are mainly of beautiful sailing breezes during the week while stuck at work, and light shifty winds tossed in on the weekends. The number of good steady easterlies could be counted on one hand.

One weekend where we did get great sailing conditions was at the South Island Champs at Pigeon Bay. Eighteen Zephyrs made the trip over the hill to spend the weekend. The stand out performance for me was that of Gary Mantell. Having not sailed much over the previous seasons, Gary sailed an excellent series with two third and two fourth placings. Glen McKenzie started the season as he finished the last, by completing a clean sweep of the five races. My personal highlight of the series and the whole season for that matter, was passing Don LePage on the last beat of race two, to take a sixth place. Peter Stokel will also have fond memories of that race finishing a very creditable fifth.

After the series the boats going to the Nationals in Tauranga were packed up and shipped off, leaving the rest of us to sail in club races and enjoying the Christmas New Year break.

Canterbury Champs was held over the complete season which to me does not give the same excitement factor as having a series over a long weekend or a shorter more condensed period. Twenty - five Zephyrs sailed at least one race with Easter being the biggest fleet to assemble.

Two races were sailed at Lyttelton, which unfortunately coincided with race one of the America's Cup. Nine started the first of these two races but only six made it to the start line for race two - the large sea and moderate to fresh easterly keeping the numbers down. The more experienced skippers enjoying their day at Lyttelton even if they did look like drowned rats by the end of the day. Glen again sailed a clean sweep series and congratulations go to him. Glen seems to be able to sail consistently well in all conditions. Hopefully he can be persuaded to share some of his tips and techniques at the next training day.

The other major event of the summer was the Estuary Penants series. Chris Nordstorm in #117 popped up a couple of times in the results with two fourth placing. Twenty boats started in at least one race, with the average number being fourteen. Zephyrs consistently had the largest number of boats on the water, and people are still buying them, which is encouraging for our class when overall numbers in other classes have been dropping off.

The last event I would like to comment on was the combined Estuary starts and finish back at your own yacht club. These were great. I enjoyed sailing in a large fleet for most of the race and finishing back at the club. This is a good way to encourage club skippers to sail in larger fleets, but still be able to pull out at their club and enjoy a beer afterwards with their own club members. It might even encourage them to enter championship events, if they find that they can complete well and still enjoy the sailing.

If you haven't already put your boat away for the winter, enjoy the rest of the season and see you on the water next spring.

**Russell Wenham**  
**Racing Secretary**

### **AUCKLAND GOINGS ON**

The French Bay season ended on 21st May on a sad note, with class stalwart Ted Frankham having his last sail in Tania before putting her up for sale. I noticed Ted was decidedly reluctant to come ashore after the last race, enjoying the gentle autumn conditions until the outgoing tide forced him to head for home. Hopefully Ted's experience in helping to run the Louis Vuitton races last year will encourage him to continue his race management interests.

Ted was in charge on the committee boat during the very successful AMI sponsored regatta held over the weekend of 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> May. A large fleet of Zephyrs contested the 4 races, with very light conditions on day one preventing the planned 5<sup>th</sup> race. Murray Sargisson showed consistent speed to take all but one race. He generously gave the rest of us a chance by starting prematurely, returning to cross the line, then proceeding to sail through the fleet. Newcomer to the class Robin Dew, who sailed a consistent series in *Winsome* to take 2nd overall, often threatened him. Robin seems to have an uncanny ability to choose the best side of the course against the judgement of the entire fleet! Phil Welham was getting used to slow travel again having lost his driver's licence after speeding a few days before. Fred McNeill was welcomed back on the water after a long 'off-season'.

The strong tides proved to be a bit of an embarrassment for a few boats when the wind died - memories of Tauranga! We also learned the meaning of the word 'trapezoid'!

The top 3 placings for the series went to Murray Sargisson 1<sup>st</sup>, Robin Dew 2<sup>nd</sup>, Bob Allen 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Thanks go to Garth Naulls and his team for extracting excellent prizes from the sponsors, including AMI Insurance. Murray also won a drawn prize for a meal for two at the Auckland Airport hotel. I am sure some of the defeated competitors in the Zephyr fleet secretly wished he would board an aircraft after the meal, preferably to a distant destination, thereby giving someone else a chance on the winner's podium.

A few of us represented the Zephyr class at an excellent dinner on the Saturday night, with guests Pete [Monster Commentary] Montgomery and Murray Jones entertaining us with AC2000 stories and AC2003 rumours, garnished with unbelievable figures in US dollars. Murray [Jones] did a great job fighting off the attention from the attached and unattached ladies of the club.

The Auckland Champs held on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> April is now a distant memory. Again light conditions prevailed, with only one race of five in over 10 knots. Race Officer Bill Falconer set a good mix of Olympic and windward/leeward courses, keeping the committee boat anchored for all but the last race of each day, with the first two races finishing off-wind. All races were very close affairs with two or three boats sometimes crossing the line within one boat-length. With no races discarded consistent results paid off, with a few contestants being punished severely when misreading the fickle winds.

Murray Sargisson prevailed in the end, but was not as dominant as usual, winning only one race. Daniel Jamieson sailed extremely well, but one bad result ruined his chance of taking overall honours. It was great to have Daniel sailing at French Bay for the first and last time this season, before he ventures south again.

**Bob Allen**

**ZEPHYRS FOR SALE**

*#59 Escapade.*

Wooden rig, refurbished hull and deck.

Contact: Roger Walker 07 849 2145

*#105 Pandora.*

Wooden rig, new launching trolley.

Contact: Geoff Moore 07 843 8682

*#14 Karora.*

Wooden mast, alloy boom, two sails, beach trolley, optional road trailer. Good all round order.

Contact: Ian Buck 07 8541151

*#91 Zest*

Original Zephyr, probably never raced.

Contact: Dennis Craig 09 8173150

*#253 Ebbtide Express*

Cedar/glass hull down to weight.

Alloy Mast and Boom, 2 Sails -One only done one nationals and one older one. Heaps of different weighted battens. Two sets of foils in bags, one set by Russell Durrant at Supa Foil Race Equipment. Two rudderstocks, tillers and extensions. One Carbon/glass lightweight stock by Supafoil.

Contact Dick Brown on (03) 328 8570

*#320 William Tell*

Reburbished boat, new mast and sail

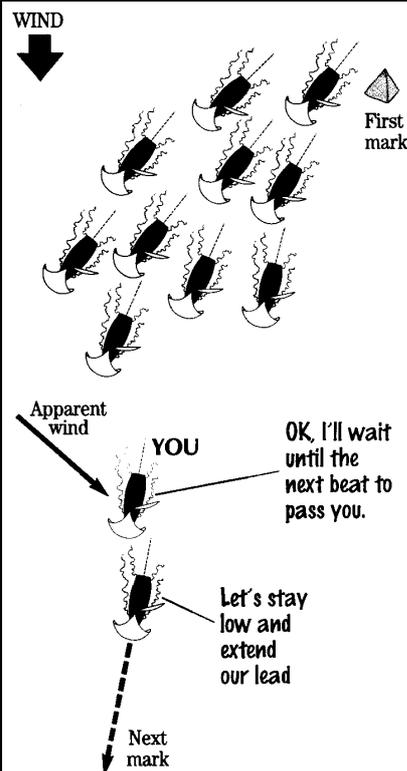
Contact: Louise O'Brien 025 855 159 or 03 384 5930.

**TACTICAL TIPS**

You rounded the windward mark near the front of a large fleet and now you are sailing down the run (or reach). There is a one boat just ahead of you and a large pack of boats not too far behind. What should you do?

One popular option is to attack the boat ahead. You could do this by luffing sharply, trying to take their wind and then rolling them. That could be a big mistake. You run the risk of winning this battle, but losing the war and being passed by the remainder of the fleet.

A better option is to point your bow to leeward of the boat ahead and push both of you down the rhumb line as fast as possible. Consolidate your position by getting farther ahead of the pack. Then, when you are no longer reachable by the rest, attack the boats around you



**FIBREGLASS BATTENS**

Fibreglass is a common batten material these days. Others may know of a North Island supplier, (if so, let me know) but those in the south can get fibreglass from:

**Gracol Enterprises**  
 31 Wickham Street  
 Bromley, Chch 6.  
 Fax 03 3844 064  
 Phone 03 384 9934

Cost \$3 per meter, batten ends an additional 50c each from any chandler.

Batten Lengths mm	
1	570
2	1115
3	1540
4	1880
5	2200
6	2445
<b>Total</b>	<b>9750</b>

**PRICE LIST FOR ZEPHYR COMPONENTS**

*Effective 1st April 2000*

*All prices include freight and GST*

Component	North Island	South Island
Mast	\$635	\$645
Boom	\$295	\$300
Sails	\$585	\$585
Sail Battens	\$170	\$170

**MARK FOY  
 WHO WAS HE?**

A number of our races here in Hamilton are Mark Foy starts. I really did not know the origins of this handicapping system until I came across this short piece in West Wind in May 1981 which explained the background to this form of racing.

Mark Foy was a Sydney department store proprietor who formed the "Sydney Flying Squadron" in 1892. Prior to this time, 20 – 24 footers with crews of up to 25 men were popular. The boats were heavy and took about 2 hours to complete a 12 mile course. A complicated handicapping system of adjusting finishing times was used to decide the winner, irrespective of the boat that crossed the finish line first. This did nothing to encourage interest in what was considered a rich man's sport.

Mark Foy designed and built an open light 18 footer with 8 foot beam and 2' 6" draft. She carried a huge sail area even in strong winds and showed terrific speed, planing down wind with 12-15 men!

To further promote public interest he planned a three mile course with boats in full view throughout. He introduced the start which bears his name – boats started on their handicap - and so created exciting finishes, much appreciated by spectators and community alike. Instead of sail numbers, which are hard to identify, he introduced coloured identification patches on sails. Sportsmen rallied around Foy to form the Sydney Flying Squadron. Racing on Mark Foy's system proved a great success and crowds flocked to the harbour for every race.

The unenlightened Committee of the 1892 Anniversary Regatta would not accept any craft without conventional sail numbers and so automatically outlawed the most spectacular racing fleet on the harbour. Mark Foy's reaction was immediate and dramatic. He provided the prize money himself for a rival regatta and stole the show from the official celebrations committee.

The Regatta was such a success that the officials had to accept the 18 footers, coloured patches and all, to all future regattas. Some 40 years later, there were an estimated 190,000 fans following the Squadron's races from ferry boats and vantage points along the shore – such was the success of the Mark Foy System.