



President's Report:

Greetings to Bodrum for the 2022 IODA Annual Meeting. The past year was a year in transition from a 2020 where the world came to a standstill due to the COVID Pandemic. IODA was fortunate to host one championship that year. We are grateful to Portoroz in Slovenia for making that happen.

For 2021, it was a recovery year for IODA on two fronts. First, we were able to host almost all our Championships albeit late in the year except for the Africans. A few were rescheduled as late as possible as the pandemic peaked and valleyed throughout the year and travel restrictions were gradually being lifted. We are so very grateful for all our Event Organizers who had to increase their planning to accommodate the Covid health restrictions that were put in place by governments. Special mention goes to my home club who in Thailand created a complete health security bubble on the venue and the hotel. Staff all stayed on site. Only the Teams and limited officials could go the hotel in a bus. There was no access to the public.

Second, due to some of the decisions we made a year ago by increasing our Plaque Fees, that we had a good recovery financially, particularly from the year before when revenues were down over 50%. We managed our budgets and cash flow over the year and kept a close eye on spending. The only difficult expense item to control was travel to events. Limited flights to various parts of the world were expensive and getting officials to our events was very difficult.

Activity in Optimist activity started to blossom in 2021 due to the lifting of travel restrictions, more events taking place and pent-up demand. Optimist sailing became very popular as an individual sport taking place in the open air and Optimist sailing schools began to start filling up. The industry was also in recovery with increased sales in both boats and sails particularly in the last quarter of 2021. We ended up on a positive note with a positive bottom line.

Last year we introduced a new pilot program called ROPE (Recycled Optimist Parts and Equipment), which is part of our sustainability strategy. It turned out to be a huge success with recognition as a finalist in the World Sailing 11th Hour Sustainability Awards. We were thrilled with the recognition, and we will be increasing our energy and focus in this area. Many members have been asking about the program which is very encouraging. Ultimately, we want to scale up the program and bring on a sponsor.

The Regatta and Technical Committees continue to pull out all the stops in their delivery of our IODA Championships as well as monitor the one design integrity of our class. All the members of our two technical committees are very dedicated to their roles within the Optimist Class. We are very fortunate to have such qualified volunteers working on your behalf. We brought on two new builders last year and there are additional builders coming online in 2022. Builder activity is brisk with new builders coming online each year. Operational efficiencies continue to be a

focus in both the events and measurement with the move to online and digital forms and data collection.

Our Vice Presidents continue to work hard in their regions to find ways to promote the Optimist for their Members and communicate regularly on many issues. They too are extremely dedicated to the Optimist Class to see that it remains the top Youth sailing class in the world.

Building and growing Optimist Sailing is a major goal for IODA. Developing new sailors and coaches will be a focus later this year. We are completely overhauling our development curriculum and delivery for a launch in 2023. We are working with top level coaches to help advise us in this area. The coaches are significant stakeholders in the Optimist Class, and we look forward to working with them in the future.

Last year we started a partnership with Harken Derm to introduce the importance of skin care for sailors who spend many hours in the sun. We feel that education is the key to learning about how to keep safe from sun damage. We are partnering with Harken Derm again this year and together hosted a Webinar with Dr. Edit Olsasz Harken in May as part of our new partnership this year.

Next year is a very important year for IODA with 3 milestones to celebrate. It is 75 years since the birth of the Optimist by Clarke Mills who built the first Optimist pram in Florida that later morphed into the Optimist Dinghy. It is 50 years since the modern Optimist became an International Class with the IRYU, now World Sailing, and it is the 60th year of the World Championship. We want to celebrate this year with several exciting programs for all our sailors, families, and members. This is a year to bring past and present Optimist sailors together and share the Opti a unique Opti experience. We look forward to engaging with all of you on the many programs and initiatives that we are planning.

I want to thank the members of the Executive Committee, Technical & Regatta committee members and the Secretariat for their continued work and support. They all work tirelessly in their individual roles and collectively together on behalf of Optimist sailors around the world.

Respectively,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Whitcraft', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin Whitcraft
IODA President