



Solo Challenger



Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society

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Fall 2001

RACE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Tom Munson, Vice- President

The 23rd Port Huron to Mackinac and the 5th Chicago to Mackinac Solo Challenge concluded with the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society proudly welcoming eleven new members into the fold.

June 23rd dawned clear and mild on both lakes. On the Lake Huron side, 17 sailors were expected to cross the start line but only 14 did so. Winds were light on a beat to Goderich. *Artemis J* was first around the Goderich mark. By Sunday morning spinnakers were showing their stuff. Light air was mixed in with some good sailing. Monday afternoon *Tango* said he did a two-pole jibe (whatever that is). I was impressed as I only jibe at night (when I can't be seen) in less than 2 knots of air. It's called a one-pole-one-hour jibe – 'nuff said. Two of our new members are from the Lake Huron side and congratulations are extended to Chuck Drummond and Mario Petit. The Lake Huron President's Cup was awarded to Chuck

Drummond – nice sailing, Chuck! First place in their respective divisions were Bob Van Eck, Pat Nugent, Adrian Vanden Hoven and Dan Pavlat.

The 2001 recipient of the Peter Fisher Memorial Trophy is Dan Pavlat who also completed his 10th Challenge this year – well earned, Daniel!

Lake Michigan was our life ring this year and kept us from sinking in red ink. They had a total of 26 entries with 21 crossing the start line. Nine of our new members are from Lake Michigan: Jon Jacobs, Bill Smith, Mike Silverthorne, Dennis Lautner, Bill Erdmann, Greg

(continued...)

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Jackson, Matt Scharl, Fred Ball and Mike Hanson. Congratulations to you, one and all! Dick Lappin switched lakes this year and said it was one of the most enjoyable Challenges he's done (this being his 19th!). Traverse City was well represented and our thanks to Cal Karr for all his efforts. *Gamera* was first across the finish line followed by *Lucretia* and *Everest Horizontal* -- all new participants -- tough crowd! Jon Jacobs on *Loose Shoes* was awarded the Lake Michigan President's Cup -- great job, Jon! Dave Rearick, Joe Turns, Alan Veenstra, Paul Schloop, Dick Lappin and Matt Scharl all took first place in their divisions. Mike Murray on *Ruhetag* went aground at Grays Reef early Wednesday morning. *Ruhetag* was towed to Walstrom Marine in Cheboygan with minimal damage to the keel. I talked to Mike a few days later and he came through with minimal damage also, although one of the employees at Walstrom Marine said he'd never seen anyone so tired. Apparently Mike's autopilot quit after the first day and a part on his rudderpost broke requiring some jury-rigging. After too many hours of hand steering, Mike just couldn't stay awake any longer. You gave it a heck of a try, Mike, and we're all pulling for you next year.

The preparation for and execution of the Solo Challenge has been a "challenge" in itself but the bottom line is: it's been fun! I've enjoyed the many hours on the phone talking to the new participants and getting to know many GLSS members a little better. None of this would have been possible without the help of our members, advertisers (please support them as they've supported us), sponsors, volunteers, friends and spouses. If I forgot to thank anyone at the skippers'

luncheon, please accept my apologies and gratitude. I would also like to thank my wife, Barbara, for her occasional assistance.

SLUGFEST ON THE GREAT LAKES

Dave Rearick

After 60 hours of brutal, competitive downwind sailing between the titans of singlehanded sailing on Lake Michigan, the 5th running of the Chicago to Mackinac Singlehanded race was over. Long time legends Tim "Mr. 50" Kent, Joe "wash" Turns, the Veenstra Brothers; Alan and Mark, Dave "whattime" Rearick, Jim "the paper boy" McLaren, Paul Schloop, Ron Wells, "Flyboy" Tony Driza, Cal "traverse" Karr along with greenhorns looking to knock off the legends; Jon "Pastor" Jacobs, Bill "William" Smith, Mike "Laughing Gull" Silverthorne, Denis Lautner, Bill Erdman, Greg Jackson, Mike Murray, Dick "nice wig" Lappin and multi-hullers Fred "too tall" Ball, Mike "handsome" Hanson, and Matt "naked turtle" Scharl started this legendary race off Chicago on Saturday June 23rd and finished Monday and Tuesday June 25th and 26th.

With the legendary record set by Dave Rearick in 1998 up for grabs, The Open 50 *Everest Horizontal* sailed by Kent along with the three multi-hullers; *Gamera* sailed by "naked", Too Tall Ball on *Lucretia* and Handsome Hanson on *Solar Express* took off leaving Whattime Rearick on his miniature 33' *Geronimo* to twist in the fate of the weather for nearly two days before it became

virtually impossible to unseat his record of just less than 42 hours.

Everest took off a bit low of the fleet and was gone over the horizon just after the start. While still in radio range, a conversation between Whattime and Mr. 50 revealed that *Everest* was nearing the Michigan shore and was digging clams off Saugatuck. Tacking off the Beach, *Everest* quickly gave back its lead as it closed in on the fleet. Tacking behind "Wash" on *CatNap*, "Wash" said *Everest* was close enough that he could see Mr. 50 still coiling up the Main Halyard.

While *Everest* and the Multis took off low for the Michigan coast, Rearick took off after the venerable Veenstras, McLaren and Mr. Wash straight up the middle. After 12 hours of critical upwind trim, Whattime finally found his way to the lead group short of Wash. Off to the west, the trio of Flyboy, Karr and Murray took on the Illinois shoreline looking for more advantageous winds to speed their luxurious sailing machines up the lake.

The first evening would bring on the Southwest wind shift everyone was looking for and Chutes were set and the run up the lake was on. *Everest*, *Lucretia*, *Gamera* were on their wheels and gone and the record looked to be in danger. Whattime had held to the center of the lake looking for the mythical SE vein of wind that has often lifted Mac Skippers to inexplicable victories and fame. Others in the fleet on both shores battled in the convergence zone with winds recorded as light and terrible. Mr. Wash seemed to find his own vein of wind and continually reported back to the fleet speeds 2 to 3 knots faster than

the rest. As other competitors approached Wash's reported position, they would find nothing of the sort of wind he reported.

As the day and evening wore on, *Everest* was heard to be gybing back and forth up the lake across the nearly dead down wind flow. *Gamera* had taken off for the other side of the lake and was off N. Illinois and approaching Cheese land quickly, Whattime and "Gramps" Veenstra both did battle with Little Sable Point relaying hair raising tales of death rolls and crash gybes in order to get off the beach. Laughing Gull lead the rest of the fleet in an early morning shower ritual while "The paper Boy" McLaren microwaved food on the deck with his radio transmissions. We heard from Ron Wells over the radio for the first time in 4 years too!! (It's required that you radio in a check-in every 6 hours.)

Conditions continued the same to the finish with variations at various legendary places up the lake. The Holes of the Manitou's, Grey's Reef Light and passage, "The Bridge" and of course the Finish. Too Tall and Naked had made it to the Reef and down the Straights of Mackinac locked in a virtual match race. Naked, steadfast in his resolve to not allow Too Tall to pass, sailed into the Hole at the Finish. Caught in numerous whirlpools and wake zones, the two waited until Mr. 50 Sailed up the Straights at double digits bringing the new wind into the finish zone. The three would finish within 2 minutes of each other, Naked first with Too Tall overlapping Mr. 50 by less than 2 seconds.

Next up the lake were Mr. Wash and Whattime, followed by Gramps and

Pastor Jon. Whattime coasted up to within a quarter mile of the finish and stopped with no wind at all. Waiting an explicable delete for an evening puff to push him across the line.

Throughout the morning and following day, the rest of the fleet finished. All boiled down, Mr. 50 missed the record by 10 hours preserving Rearick's legendary status as whattimeisitanyways. In Superior division, *Geronimo* sailed by Whattime corrected out in first with *Everest Horizontal* sailed by Mr. 50 in second. In the Michigan Division, *Catnap* sailed by "Wash" bested "Pastor" Jon on *Loose Shoes*, Cal "traverse" Karr on *Belle*, Bill "William" Smith on *Skyhigh* and "Laughing Gull" on *Chute the Breeze*.

In the Ontario Division, Alan "Gramps" Veenstra bested the division in first with his rival brother Mark in second on *Bam.Boo.Zel* followed by Dennis Lautner on *Kyeta* and Radio Free Ron Wells on *Free to Choose*.

The proverbial Paul Schloop on *Blue Max* bested Erie Division. "Flyboy" on *Whoa Nellie* followed by Bill Erdman on *Harbor Haze* closed out the division. Huron Division found *Ginger Kay* sailed by the Cross Racer Dick "nice wig" Lappin at the top of the heap followed by the leader of "our gang" Sir Jim McLaren on *Bedouin* and Greg Jackson on *Compass Rose*. Unfortunately, Michael Murray on *Ruhetag* after surviving an Apollo 13esq episode of jury-rigging was unable to complete the course.

In the Green Bay Division, the multi-hulls finished with Matt "Naked" Scharl onboard *Gamera* setting a first for a

solo, multi-hull passage from Chicago to Mackinac and a Multi hull record, followed by *Lucretia* sailed by "Too Tall" Fred Ball and *Solar Express* sailed by "Handsome" Hanson.

The Pub Crawl results combined both fleets from Chicago and Pt. Huron. While a tactical decision by Dave Evans pulled the Pt. Huron division into Horn's, the Chicago fleet lead by Laughing gull caught a lift at the Pink Pony and were able to do an end around and ended up at the Horns for the finally dash to the finish. As participants stepped aside, the last of the fleet worked their way thru Horn's to the Irish Bar next door where last seen were Flyboy Driza, navigator Whattime Rearick and the legendary Phantom of Singlehanded Sailing, Rob "frozen in the North" Robins. Whattime gave in and retired. Frozen and Flyboy were last seen locked in a leaning tower configuration and headed to the docks. Flyboy was unloaded onboard *Whoa Nellie* with the explanation, "there you go Joanie, he's all yours" by Frozen who was once again crowned Pub Crawler of the year as he headed back down the empty, lonely streets of Mackinac.

LOWER LAKE HURON SOLO CHALLENGE

Mark S. Gutteridge

It is sometimes a way of remembering different races in different years by linking it with something else significant that has happened in our own life or others. It is truly regrettable that the 2001 version of the Lower Huron Solo Challenge will always be linked with the

horrific events that have occurred in our good neighbours' country. My sincerest, heartfelt condolences to our good American Friends and others affected by this most terrible crime.

The Lower Huron Solo Challenge according to the Friday weather reports had the makings of fast reaching conditions and tough upwind beating. I arrived at the Sarnia Yacht Club Friday evening for the final registration of competitors and the skippers meeting. There was discussion of the weather which was forecast to have winds from the South to Southwest at 20 to 25 knots and gusts to 35 knots. Most of the discussion was as to what sail combination that was to be used and what class to enter. Some skippers opted to enter the jib and main class because they reasoned that there would not be an opportunity to fly a spinnaker in the high winds. There were skippers that were just interested in renewing old rivalries and those also that were furthering their education in short handed sailing. I know each time I go sailing shorthanded sailing it is a further learning experience about my boat, the elements and myself.

Saturday morning dawned with the meteorologists putting a check mark in the correct column of their forecasting score sheet. As the race committee left the harbour we were hailed on the VHF radio by some competitors that decided not to risk equipment failure in the high winds. After we set the starting line I watched Scott McNeil on a Henderson 30 and Eric Vigrass on a SR33 each of which are high sail area to displacement boats testing the compass courses that would have to be sailed. These light displacement boats were flying on the reaches but when they turned upwind

they were quite overpowered and could possibly be in over their head. Both Scott and Eric called me on the VHF and with disappointment very evident in their voices informed me that they would not be able to compete.

The Jib and Main class was the first start. Jean Chorestecki, the principal race officer for SYC/PHYC, asked me when I might cancel the challenge. I relayed to her there were people out there that would be upset if I cancelled even with Storm warnings but Gale warnings would most likely keep us in the harbour. Charles Harris sailing *Sly Fox* was first to cross the starting line followed shortly thereafter by Erik Mortensen sailing *Barracuda* and Tom Hughes sailing *Split Decision*.

Division "B" was about to start when we noticed a competitor whose shiny kevlar mainsail was split from the luff to the leech between the first and second reef points. John and Jean Chorestecki both commented that there was another boat that would unfortunately not be able to start. I said "Hell, that's Captain Calamity Phil Rubright; that's not going to stop him. It is just another minor inconvenience." As Phil passed close to the start boat he asked us if we had a spare mainsail and on hearing we did not he said, "Oh well I think it will last to the first mark". I commented that Phil was one of the best sailors I have ever met and after all this was the Lower Huron Challenge.

With Phil who was sailing *Novation* in the "B" division were Jim Bennett on *Kiara*, Steve Stoll (first timer) on *Bayonet* and Harold Beaton on *On Beat*. The previous evening, Harold was offered 50 bucks by Phil if he didn't start

the race. Harold didn't bite. Phil should have mentioned that it was \$50 in US funds.

The "A" division was comprised of Cheryl Cameron sailing *C Spray*, Bob Van Eck sailing *Tango* and Dave Evans sailing *Ratso*.

Before their start I had lost sight of *Ratso*. I was looking to the south which was below the starting and also into the wind. It would have been a spinnaker start if the wind wasn't blowing 20 to 25 knots. Dave and *Ratso* were nowhere to be seen. I panned the horizon in a 360-degree arc. No Dave, No *Ratso* anywhere! Well, I thought, he must have had a gear failure and had to put back into port to make repairs. The gun for the "A" division went off on time and Cheryl and Bob started with no problems evident except they had no *Ratso* with them. A few minutes had passed and we were about to hoist the anchor of the committee boat when out of the mist on the course side of the starting line comes this pug nosed boat. I said "That's *Ratso*. What the hell is Dave doing down there?" We put up the individual recall flag and tried to inform Dave by VHF that he was on course side early. He did not reply but you knew he knew there had been a foul up because he was beating hard back to the starting line. Dave rounded the buoy end of the line and finally started. I'm sure he used that end of the line so he wouldn't have to talk to us.

Everybody finally had been accounted for so we pulled up the anchor and went back to the SYC to await the return of the Hardy Souls. I knew you were all curious where I would use that term.

Thanks again to John and Jean Chorestecki for volunteering their time and boat *Ce Me Now* to again start our event. By the way, Jean's granddaughter is Katie Pettibone who is about to compete in the Volvo Ocean Race, which is more commonly referred to as the Whitbread.

I returned to the race committee shack at noon to check the progress of the fleet and heard from *Ratso* that the lead boats were about to round the Kettle Point Buoy. I went home to cut the grass and then returned to the race shack to await the first boats of the fleet. Several people started to arrive to offer their assistance. Field glasses were trained on the horizon, scanning back and forth trying to pick up a boat. The first boat to appear was *C Spray* tacking in from the Northwest. I would have thought that the fleet would have short tacked the Canadian shore to avoid the waves and get some wind shelter from the shore. But then again Cheryl's boat does draw 8 feet and she has to shift ballast every time she tacks. Cheryl and *C Spray* were first to finish.

Bob Van Eck was next to finish and was congratulated by his wife Helen. Helen's arm was getting tired waiting for Bob. She had been throwing training dummies into the surf for their dog to fetch.

As each boat finished Jack Whyatt was inputting the times into the computer. That was a lot easier and lot less stressful than trying to handbomb the results with pencil and paper.

All of the boats were accounted for before 6P.M. The awards and barbecue were scheduled to start at 8P.M. I informed as many people as I could that

we would try to start early. It had to be a tough day on the water with the high winds and this would allow tired bodies to get to bed a little earlier.

Just as the competitors and guests arrived at the SYC clubhouse a violent thunderstorm with torrents of rain passed through. If you remember it already had been blowing 20 to 35 knots throughout the challenge. I said a little prayer of thanks and poured myself that rum I had promised myself when I knew everybody had finished safely. I made it a double.

The BBQ was fired up, the bar was fired up and the post race analysis began in earnest. Phil Rubright was explaining the advantages of reefing your mainsail in the middle. Dave Evans was trying to explain his starting manoeuvre and also stating that this was the best Lower Huron Challenge ever. Dave likes big wind! Bob Van Eck was looking for something to fix. Jack Whyatt was trying not to give away the results. Erik Mortensen was telling jokes. Steve Stoll was all grins for finishing his first Challenge. Jim Bennett was trying to keep the family happy and at the same time had a sly grin on his face. Charles Harris was very quiet. The strain and fatigue were showing in his eyes but a smile was also evident. Tom Hughes was happy that he had completed another Challenge and had learned more about himself and his boat. Harold Beaton was cutting the watermelon and looking after the BBQ. He was also trying to sneak a few words in with everyone about his experiences of the day. Ed Schultz who withdrew from the race was also pleased with his performance. It was the first time he had ever singlehanded his boat and he came

close to completing the challenge. He recognised that he was too tired to continue in the high winds and made a prudent decision to withdraw. Cheryl Cameron had a previous engagement and could not attend the BBQ.

The awards were handed out. You can check the results on the GLSS website.

The draw was held for the free one-year subscription to *Ocean Navigator*. Ron Picard was the winner of the draw. Thank you to Dael Gagner of Navigator Publishing for providing the gift and all the free copies of *Ocean Navigator*, *Ocean Voyager* and *American Yacht Review* that were provided to all of the competitors.

I found a couple things interesting about this year's Challenge. In the overall corrected results Bob Van Eck was first on a J-40, Jim Bennett was second on an Oday 27 and Eric Mortensen was third on a C&C 39. A small boat sandwiched between two big fat boats. The second thing was I asked if anybody had checked their knot log to see how far they had actually sailed. Tom Hughes had sailed 60 N. miles in a little over 8 and 1/4 hours on a Catalina 34. That's moving pretty fast considering it was a beat for half the race in strong winds.

Many thanks to Helen Van Eck and Maggie Evans for all the help they provided in the kitchen. Also thanks to all of the other people who pitched in to make the event a success.

LAKE MICHIGAN SOLO SCRAMBLE

Dave Rearick

On September 14th, the GLSS held the second annual Lower Lake Michigan Solo Scramble. 10 starters, 5 from each port, Holland, MI and Racine, WI, started the 100-mile race around the lower weather buoy and to the finish in Michigan City. The weather was clear with light winds from the NE at the start. Winds built thru the evening to the low teens in strength and then eased up again as sun up came. Sailors enjoyed a spectacular sky of stars and some great sailing.

First to finish was *Gamera* skippered by Matt (naked) Scharl, next was David (curly) Wagner on *Gigi* from Racine. Following in order of finish were: John (Varnish) Ayres on *Rip Tide*, Joe (wash) Turns on *Cat Nap*, Bill (Commodore Dodger) Erdman on *Harbor Haze*, Mark (Punch) Veenstra on *Bamboozel*. Bill (Mr. Grill) Smith on *Sky High* was followed by Paul (Sandbagger) Schloop on *Blue Max*, Fred (Barkeep) on *Frolic and Sin* and running sweep was Ron (Radio) Wells on *Free to Choose*.

Three additional entrants and one unofficial participant were unable to make the start from either weather issues or complications resulting from the previous weeks disaster.

After the finish, an impromptu gathering of solo sailors and sailors from the Michigan City Yacht Clubs Westward Ho race gathered around a cooler of beer and the webber grill to commence the evening festivities. While telling stories and grilling hamburgers and brats under the direction of Bill the Grill Smith, we got updates from Sir Jim on *Sovereign* as to his whereabouts and his intended though not expected ETA. Dave Rearick and Cheryl Silverthorn were

interviewed by *Gourmet Magazine* with regards to the event's culinary delights. Freddie the Barkeep treated everyone to his version of River Water, though he apologized and offered to come back again and spend some time matching the color to that of Michigan City's Trail Creek. After a couple of jugs of River water passed, Laughing Gull (Silverthorn) ran back to his place and returned with a frozen container of purple stuff – nicknamed the Grape Crush.

An informal awards ceremony was commenced once the last participants were in. With a gathering of 25 to 30 sailors and friends, we opened a bottle of Glenlivet Scotch and passed it around in tribute to those in New York and Washington that were spending their day working in the rubble of the disaster as well as those who were keeping vigil and grieving for lost friends. Informal results are as follows: Holland start, *Gamera*, *CatNap*, *Sky-High*, *Blue Max* and *Free to Choose*. Racine Start, *Rip Tide*, *Harbor Haze*, *Gigi*, *Bamboozle*, and *Frolic and Sin*.

All in all, we enjoyed a wonderful day of sailing, friends and the Spirit that makes this group special. We added 3 new sailors to the Lake Michigan crowd with hopes they will be joining us for the Solo Mac next year. A lot of talk thru the evening was concerning the Solo Super Mac coming next summer. Sounds like more than a few are interested in participating.

MESSAGE FROM TIM KENT

(Tim Kent asked that the following be read at the Skippers' Luncheon on

Mackinac Island, but somehow it fell through the cracks...)

I regret not being able to attend the lunch today. Pick your excuse:

1. I (really) have to get back to work.
2. The boat needs to be back in Milwaukee for the Queen's Cup.

I prefer #2.

This event and the people I have met through it have changed my life. Five years ago I did my first race; two years later I was back with a different boat. This year, I brought the boat that I will do the Around Alone race in next year. Talk about getting the bug in a big way!

I would like to thank Dave Rearick, Jim McLaren, Alan Veenstra and all of you for introducing me to this great sport.

We've formed a company, are raising money and have a marvelous boat. Check out our website:
www.everesthorizontal.com

OUR CONDOLENCES

It is with deep regret and sadness that we inform you of the death of GLSS member, Bud Finney. Bud died October 31, 2001 from injuries received when the all terrain vehicle in which he was riding flipped over.

Bud became a member of the GLSS in 1995 after completing the Port Huron to Mackinac Challenge on his boat *Largo*. He completed three more Challenges in '96, '97 and '98. Bud was a warm and genial man and a highly respected member of the GLSS.

The family has asked that donations be made to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. The GLSS has made a donation in Bud's memory.

LAKE HURON TRAGEDY

Our sister organization, Doublehanded Sailing Association, lost two sailors (Guy Hornett & Shelly Hind) during their annual Huron Doublehanded Challenge this summer. It is indeed a tragedy when we hear of the sudden loss of life while sailing.

Our Society joins the DSA in mourning the loss of these two fine sailors on our Great Lakes. The GLSS has made a small donation in the memory of these two sailors to organizations selected by their families.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 18, 2001

- GLSS Special Meeting –
Roller Furling Credit
Discussion
- North Star Sail Club
- 4:00 PM

January 26, 2002

- Annual General Membership Meeting (AGM)
- Bayview Yacht Club
- Details to Follow

June 15, 2002

- 24th / 6th Annual Mackinac Solo Challenge