



Solo Challenger



Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society

Officers:

President : Tom Munson
Vice President/Race Chairmen: Pat Nugent
Treasurer: Wally McMinn
Recording Secretary: Michael Garcia

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Bob Van Eck
Jim McLaren
Rob Robins
Chuck Drummond

Dave Rearick
Alan Veenstra

Spring 2002

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The following is a recap and progress report for the GLSS since the beginning of the year.

We started 2002 with an outstanding AGM Meeting and Banquet on January 26. Our skippers numbered 21 from Lake Huron and 10 from Lake Michigan. Along with 21 guests we had a total of 52 attendees. GLSS member, Tim Kent, gave an interesting presentation and slide show on preparing *Everest Horizontal* for the "Around Alone Race" beginning in Newport, RI on September 15. Dave Rearick recently sailed with Kent to Charleston where Kent will begin his 2,000 mile qualifier. We wish him well. Several GLSS members are already making plans to be in Newport in September for the start of the "Around Alone".

On March 26, the GLSS held a Safety Seminar and Open House. Unfortunately, the weather didn't cooperate and kept our numbers down somewhat with 13 guests and 20 GLSS members attending. One guest drove all the way from Sandusky, OH to hear

about our organization. We're hoping to see him at the start line on June 15. Our speakers for the evening provided some interesting and useful information. Our ship's doctor, Mike Garcia, gave advice on keeping ourselves alert and healthy while doing the Challenge. A few tips were to avoid taking medications that make you drowsy, don't overdose on caffeine (it may keep you awake for a while but you will eventually crash hard!) and drink plenty of fluids (*see the article on dehydration elsewhere in this newsletter*). Al Merrithew spoke about when to shorten sail. Considering his excellent record in the GLSS Challenges, you might want to bend his ear a little on this subject. Chuck Drummond is our resident expert on weather. He gave a very knowledgeable presentation on the whys and what fors of weather and he's the man to talk to if you have any weather-related questions.

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Michael Clow from *The Yachtsman* showed us several articles of clothing for keeping warm and dry in all kinds of weather conditions. His advice for the evening was “avoid cotton.”

Your 2002 Race Chairman, Pat Nugent, is a busy man these days. Along with the demanding job of organizing the Challenge, he still manages to write the *Rode Show* and, of course, he has to his own boat to get ready for the start line. Preparation for the Big Mac/Super Mac Challenge is in full swing and Pat has everything under control and right on schedule, the Rode Show we all enjoy so much appears in our e-mail every week like clockwork, but I’m just not sure about *Spanky!* It’s my understanding that there are a number of hardy souls planning to do the Super Mac from Chicago to Port Huron. Cheryl Cameron is going the other way. Also, for your information, Chuck Drummond is in charge of the finish line on Mackinac Island.

The Lower Huron Solo on September 8 is under the direction of Mark Gutteridge, the Lake Michigan Scramble on September 13 is in the hands of Jim McLaren, and the St. Clair Solo on September 28 is being chaired by Dan Pavlat. Many thanks to these fellows for “volunteering.” They will be glad to answer any questions you may have regarding their particular race.

Please keep in mind that the policy regarding marina reservations that went into effect last year is still required this year. Call 1-800-PARKS to make your reservation.

A sail magazine that I have never seen before was delivered to the GLSS post

office box recently. It’s called *Latitudes and Attitudes* and has been in print for about 5 years. I really enjoyed it – it’s a fun read. You might want to check it out.

As always, please keep your suggestions and questions coming.

Tom Munson

GLSS Holds Spring Safety Seminar

The GLSS conducted its Spring Safety Seminar on March 26, 2002. North Star Sail Club hosted the event. Four speakers presented information from their areas of expertise.

Al Merrithew spoke on the importance of attention to detail. “Know your boat,” says Al, “If you should need a repair while underway, you won’t have time to do research prior to fixing it!” Al also spoke of the importance of recognizing even subtle changes in temperature or wind direction.

Michael Garcia presented an overview of medications and what we can expect from them. He gave us terrific suggestions for an on-board first aid kit. He stressed the importance of good nutrition during the Mac Solo – especially, drink plenty of water!

Chuck Drummond discussed the way local effects can have an impact on weather patterns. He explained that on-shore and offshore breezes would have their most pronounced effect with clear

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skies. Chuck gave several weather examples from last year's Port Huron start for the Mac Solo.

Michael Clow impressed those in attendance by showing how he puts all of his stay-warm gear in a SMALL duffel bag! Michael had examples of lightweight warm gear especially suited for sailing. Stay away from cotton and you are sure to have a warm and dry ride to the island!

The evening concluded with a Q&A session among prospective entrants and seasoned veterans.

Race Chairman's Message

Plans are well underway for the GLSS's premier event, the Mackinac Solo Challenge. Starts will take place from Port Huron and Chicago on June 15 in pursuit of a common finish line at Mackinac Island. This year will mark the 6th Chicago-to-Mackinac Challenge and the 24th Port Huron-to-Mackinac Challenge.

The work to prepare for the Challenge is the result of many people volunteering their time. Committees for the starting lines and finish line are already in place. Board members have already stepped forward to solicit ads for our race book, coordinate the purchase of medallions, flags & T-shirts, and most important – we are recruiting new members!

As Race Chairman, I am overwhelmed with coordinating this important event. However, my mind is placed at ease as different experts step forward to handle

different facets of the Solo Challenge. We're fortunate to have so many talented and generous members in our Society. Applications are due May 17 – send yours in now!

Patrick Nugent
GLSS Vice-President & Race Chairman

2001 Solo Mac Race

by Matt Scharl

Many people in Chicago are aware of the Chicago to Mackinac Sailboat race held in mid-July. There's another sailboat race to Mackinac that covers the same course in mid-June. The difference is the race is done solo: one person per boat doing the work of up to twelve. Some of the guys call this the hard Mac as apposed to the fully crewed race being the easy Mac.

This will be my first solo race aboard my recently purchased F25C trimaran, "Gamera". The boat will be the second smallest in size, but is the third fastest based on handicap in the fleet of 22. There will be two others, a Newick 50 called "Lucretia" owned by Fred Ball and a Contour 34 called "Solar Express" owned by Mike Hansen.

My first goal is to simply be the first person to sail a multihull solo from Chicago to Mackinac. The secondary goal is to be first to finish of all the boats. This may take a minor miracle to beat Lucretia and a specially designed Open 50 called "Everest Horizontal" owned by Tim Kent. Tim is preparing for the Around Alone Race next year.

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Both owe me about 4 hours and 20 minutes on handicap. My only chance to be first to finish will be to read the weather and use strategy to better play the wind shifts. If the weather ends up being straightforward and the course becomes a drag race they will crush me. Preparation for this race isn't unlike an Ironman (I've done three). If you don't put in the time you will suffer, sleep deprivation being the number one concern while solo sailing. This race requires a qualifying sail of at least 100 miles lasting at least 24 hours. I did mine in mid May. Other than the boats electrical system failing, freezing to death and ripping my mainsail, it was uneventful. The qualifying sail showed me what I needed to improve upon, not unlike an early season triathlon.

After rewiring the boat and fine-tuning the sail handling systems, here I am ready to shove off for the start of the race.

My pre-race weather analysis is the wind will be out of the northeast and light. The course to the Manitou Islands is 18 degrees (the first point of land that needs to be sailed around, 200 miles away). Based on this knowledge my game plan will be to go up the Wisconsin shoreline in search of increased breeze due to the heating of the land (sea breeze). With the high-pressure system still west of the lake I expect the wind to be lighter out in the lake.

1020 Sat

The start at 0820 was uneventful, with only one person on each boat no one wanted to be too aggressive. Weather surprise right from the start, the breeze is northwest at 6 to 8 knots, so much for the Wisconsin shoreline. I'm sailing on

port steering 50 degrees, only 30 degrees off course. The bigger boats are ahead and to leeward of me and the rest of the fleet is behind and strung out on my weather hip. Strategically, I would like to tack to the left, but the risk of splitting from the fleet this early is too much. I'll sit tight for now.

1040 Sat

The wind has gone right 10 degrees. Although I'm now sailing 40 degrees off course, this is still the favored tack. My desire to tack to the Wisconsin shoreline is strong, if I see anyone tack I will also.

1130 Sat

Never did tack, the wind has gone back right and still in the 6 to 8 knot range. I'm now sailing just 10 degrees off course, any chance of tacking may be gone. I've gained on Lucretia and Everest Horizontal the same way the smaller boats have gained on me.

1440 Sat

Steering 50 degrees now, the wind has shifted back to the right some and still no one has tacked. I'm roughly in the middle of the lake. The radio weather reports show the wind going around to the southwest. Hopefully this will happen before I get to the Michigan shoreline. Ideally if the big boats have to tack up the shoreline before the shift

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Effects of Dehydration

Even mild dehydration can slow down one's metabolism. Lack of water can trigger daytime fatigue. A drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic math and difficulty focusing on the computer screen or on a printed page. If your urine is dark yellow, you are not drinking enough water.

hits and I can avoid it I'll make up a bunch of distance on them. It's a bit cold out here, 50 degrees, but sunny. All and all I couldn't ask for better conditions.

1820 Sat

The wind has finally shifted to the left; right now it's about due west. I'm basically sailing right up the course now. Everest Horizontal has been hurt by the late shift and had to tack up the shoreline. Lucretia is now leading, with me in second. The rest of the fleet has gained on us due to the fact we've sailed further distance than them. Now with everyone laying the course it's become just what I didn't want, a drag race.

1940 Sat

The wind has completely died and returned from the south. As I look around I'm the first to put up a spinnaker. I'm moving at about 3 knot's, content with my current position. The boats to my left have been forced to sail more downwind and Lucretia, to my right, close to shore in less breeze. The lake is like a mirror, not a cloud in the sky, and the sunset is beautiful. Not a bad way to spend an evening.

2140 Sat

Still not a ripple on the lake, but I'm moving at about 3 knots straight up the course. Although I've lost most of the other boats in the darkness, I know that Lucretia is still to my right. Going to try getting a 20-minute nap in these consistent conditions.

0130 Sun

There are millions of stars out here, and even though I'm 100 miles from Chicago I can still see its glow in the

sky. I've now made my move to the left. I'm steering 50 degrees left of course working my way west of the fleet, but still mostly concerned with separating from Lucretia. The weather reports across the region are calling for 5 to 10 knots of wind in Michigan and 10 to 15 knots in Wisconsin, both from the south. The high-pressure system has passed so I'm now sailing away from it in search of more breeze. Almost seems like a no-brainer. Time will only tell.

0630 Sun

I've been successful in becoming the left most boat. At the 0600 position report I was smack in the middle of the lake off Sheboygan, WI. Relative to Lucretia I'm 5 miles north and 20 miles west of her. In long distance racing where you are on the lake matters less than your relative position to the competition. My risk is the wind goes back west, if that happens I'm stuck going dead downwind while Lucretia sails a straight line to the mark. I have confidence in what I'm doing and continue to the northwest.

1000 Sun

(What to do, what to do?) At this point I'm sailing due north 30 degrees off course. Starting to see the occasional whitecap, indicating the wind is now over 10 knots, still out of 220 degrees. I have a few more miles before I'm forced into gibing back to the right so I'll hang with this for a little longer.

1100 Sun

All right, just got a 50 degree wind shift to 170 degrees and an increase to 15 knots. I've gybed and am now aiming right at the Manitou's going 11 knots with the best angle in the fleet. Lucretia and the other boats are stuck going dead

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downwind, while I can sail a straight line. This couldn't be better.

1700 Sun

Screaming along, averaging 10 to 12 knots still straight up the course. I've covered 70 miles in the last 6 hours, only 8 miles to the course change at the north end of Manitou passage. I'm not sure where Lucretia is, but he must be behind. I'll know for sure at the 1800 position report. For now I'm going to keep sailing as close to the proper course as possible. This has been an amazing last 6 hours.

1820 Sun

The move to the left paid off big, I'm now 13 miles directly ahead of Lucretia. I have no idea where Everest Horizontal is, probably over the horizon in front. That's an awesome downwind boat. Looks like a sleepless night for me. There is no way I'm going to let a lead like this evaporate.

0100 Mon

At the 0000 position report I was still 13 miles ahead of Lucretia. The wind has died and gone all over the place, this is what weathermen call light and variable. The wind, what little there is, is swinging from 90 degrees to 270 degrees; I still have the spinnaker up. To add to the difficulties, it's so dark out here I can't distinguish the water from the sky. No sleep for me tonight, luckily I don't feel tired. I'm so obsessed with keeping the boat moving fast, I can't relax enough to doze off.

0430 Mon

Finally some breeze. Tight spinnaker reaching towards Gray's Reef 10 miles ahead. The waves are six inches and boat

speed is a consistent 12-13 knots. If this holds I'll be in the barn by 0900.

0515 Sun

I'm now parked 100 yards from Gray's Reef lighthouse. Amazingly in 50 yards I went from 12 knots to 2. The straights of Mackinaw are notorious for light and fickle winds. I'm stuck and I know Lucretia is still making 12 knots; looks like this could be a race after all.

0600 Mon

Just rounded the north end of Gray's Reef, taking 45 minutes to sail 2.5 miles. I can now see Lucretia on the horizon. Over the radio he said he's sailing at 10 knots and Everest Horizontal is behind him. I'M LEADING! With me in very light breeze and them sailing up to me in the new wind the tension in my back is unbelievable. How can I ever explain losing a 13-mile lead?

0800 Mon

I've had to sail up wind to the north side of the straights while Lucretia has been able to still sail in different wind on a straight line to Maciknac. Were now dead even, separated by about a mile. Only a miracle will keep me ahead now.

1000 Mon

Somehow I've managed to stay ahead by just 50 yards. Match racing (staying between him and the finish) for the last hour and a half, only 10 more miles to the finish. I haven't eaten anything since 0300 and have been hand steering as opposed to using the auto helm since 0000 hours. I'm starting to feel the effects of not sleeping for two days, if it wasn't so close I think I'd be suffering a lot more. The bridge is just ahead.

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1030 Mon

Just made it under the Mackinaw Bridge, what an amazing sight seeing it from underneath. Forced to give up half my lead when I got caught in an adverse current behind one of the towers.

1100 Mon

Light wind from the east, 4 miles to the finish, still leading by 100 yards. The island ferrys' wakes are making this very difficult to keep the boat moving. It's almost cruel to be so close yet so far; I have been able to smell the horses on the island for 4 hours now.

1130 Mon

Everest Horizontal is now only 6 miles behind with a spinnaker up. Looks like the wind is finally beginning to fill in from the west. If he catches Lucretia and I before we get across the finish line we're dead. Neither of us can keep up with him downwind.

1200 Mon

100 yards from the finish, 1-knot adverse current, island ferrys and very light west wind. Could this get any more difficult? Lucretia is 150 yards back, not moving any faster than me. Everest Horizontal is 2 miles back making 6 knots right at us. I've got about 20 minutes to get across the line.

1215 Mon

Just did a complete 360, absolutely no steerage. I think I've just developed an ulcer from the stress. This has been like trying to stay in front of a Ferrari while your driving the family sedan.

1230 Mon

Finally moving in the correct direction with the mainsail perpendicular to the

boat. I'm moving about a quarter knot, looks like I'm going to do it.

1238 Mon

Crossed the finish line first with 1 knot of wind from the west. Totally exhausted.

1242 Mon

Lucretia crosses the line in 12 knots of breeze followed 2 seconds later by Everest Horizontal.

The sense of accomplishment is almost overwhelming, similar to finishing the Ironman. You're so happy to have finished, but have no energy to show it. It takes a while for it to really set in. Nothing is more rewarding than reaching a goal.

Over the next 30 hours all but 1 of the boats finished. I won the multihull division and ended up 4th overall. By being the first multihull to cross the finish line I believe I became the first person to sail a multihull single-handed from Chicago to Mackinac. All told I couldn't have asked for better conditions. The most frequent question I've had since finishing is would I ever do it again, most definitely.

Post Solo Challenge Beaver Island Open

The Lake Michigan contingent has plans for the annual 'Beaver Island Open' and invites participation from all GLSS members. Here are some particulars from the event organizer:

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- We will be departing Mackinaw for Beaver either the day of the awards or the next day - leave it open for weather and a vote of participants.
- Spouses are welcome - Janie and Ann (Cal & my wives) work that week so we are bachelors. The other three guys with us last year also are temporary bachelors that week.
- We anchor out in either Garden Is. (able to squeeze 7.5' through the entrance last year, 10' inside) or St. James bay - This also decided by vote and/or the weather.
- We have the most wonderful dinner that evening at anchor. One of the guys is a chef and he prepares the "worlds best" corned beef meals you could dream of. The after effects of the corned beef and cabbage might be another reason the wives stay away.
- We party, fish, swim, etc., etc., till the wee hours of the morn. This is mostly bravado, we're all old farts, last year we all fell asleep about 11:00. We did find a couple Cuban cigars on my boat, and I'm happy to report they are burned up!
- The "Beaver Island Open" is played the next day. Our rules are:
 - Only one club per player - this was originally enacted because six of us started the "Open" and six bags of clubs in a 30'er is - well, a mess!
 - BYOB, there is no clubhouse (or water for that matter) on the course and one must be careful not to become dehydrated!
 - You are "limited" to one "mulligan" per hole!
 - "Teeing" the ball up on the fairways is not only allowed it is sometimes the only way you can avoid damage to your club!
- If your ball falls into one of the thousands (I'm not kidding here) of rabbit holes you are allowed to remove the ball with out penalty. If you should kill the rabbit in the process the "ranger" will hunt you down -- seems the owner likes his furry friends. You may borrow a friends club, providing it is done in a friendly manner, the usual fee is a PBR.
- We hitch-hike back to the Shamrock for our awards ceremony and to re-hydrate.
- We spend the afternoon re-cooperating, fishing swimming, etc.
- Dinner is at the Shamrock where we kill some red meat and perhaps a mollusk or two.
- Weather permitting we depart Beaver for the "Real world" (this is what the natives of Beaver island say when referring to any place off the island) the next day; curiously it has never been an early departure.

Green fees are about \$4.00/9 holes on an honor system, we have yet to see anyone connected with management. There are no carts of any type available. This is the absolute worst golf course any of us has ever seen; but amazingly, at least for me, this is the most fun golf outing of my summer, so I guess that kinda makes it the best course.

Room Available at MIYC for Solo Challenge

There is one room available Monday and Tuesday June 17-18 at Mackinac Island Yacht Club for Single-Handed Challenge Participants. Contact Tom Munson (734) 522-8124 if you are interested in renting the room

GREAT LAKES SINGLEHANDED SOCIETY

PORT HURON TO MACKINAC ISLAND

or

CHICAGO TO MACKINAC ISLAND

or

Super Mac

SINGLEHANDED CHALLENGE

JUNE 15, 2002

Application & Waiver

Name _____ e-mail _____

Address _____ City/State/Prov _____ Zip _____

Phones: (Daytime) _____ (Evening) _____ (Cell) _____

Yacht Name _____ Design _____ Sail No _____ Length _____ Beam _____ Draft _____

Registration/Documentation No _____ GLSS Sponsor Name _____

Emergency Contact _____ Emergency Phone No _____

This entry is for:

Division (check one)

Mono-hulled Division
Multi-hulled Division
Main & Jib Division

Course (check one)

Port Huron to Mackinac
Chicago to Mackinac
Port Huron to Chicago*
Chicago to Port Huron*

*Additional qualifications required

Neither the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society, nor the race committee, nor any other committee, nor a member of any other committee, nor any officer or director of the Society shall be liable for any injury or damage whatsoever to persons or property connected with or belonging to any participant in the challenge, whether due to any negligence of the Society or its aforementioned affiliated parties, or any other causes. All persons participating in this challenge do so solely at their own risk. An entrant represents to the Society that his/her vessel is seaworthy, that he/she is 18 years of age or older, competent, and the requisite lifesaving equipment is aboard and in operable condition.

Signature of Entrant

Signature of Owner (if different)

Deadline for Entry: May 17, 2002 Mail To: GLSS P.O. Box 36933 Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236

GREAT LAKES SINGLEHANDED SOCIETY

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ARE:

1. Evidence of liability insurance (updated copy submitted by **June 14, 2002**).
2. The completed Sailing Experience Resume Form detailing evidence of personal qualification. (Evidence of solo passage may be submitted any time up to **June 10, 2002**). Item 2 is not required for GLSS members.
3. Copy of PHRF or Viking MH Rating Certificate, if available.
4. Check for \$210 (\$175 for GLSS active members) **in U.S. funds only** payable to GLSS.
 - Additional \$60 entry fee is required for the Super Mac.
 - Super Mac is either Port Huron to Chicago or Chicago to Port Huron

If U.S. Sailing member, deduct 10 percent from entry fee (send proof of membership).

Include \$50 late entry fee if submitted **after May 17, 2002**.

Absolutely no entries after **June 7, 2002**.

5. Life raft inspection certificate must be submitted by **June 14, 2002**.

PHRF or Viking multihull rating _____ from a recognized racing association, if available.

Please attach a copy of your PHRF or Viking multi-hull rating certificate. If you do not have a rating, please complete the following information. Any omitted data can result in the race committee completing the data to the best of their ability. No requests for rating changes will be accepted after **May 17, 2002**.

LWL _____ Beam _____ Draft _____ Displacement _____ Year Built _____

Keel: Fixed ___ Fin ___ Full ___ Hull Material _____

Engine: Inboard _____ or Outboard _____

Prop: Fixed ___ Folding ___ Feather ___

Rig: Short ___ Tall ___ Ultra-tall ___ Wing ___ Other _____

Foretriangle Height I = ___' ___" (deck to top of headstay)

Foretriangle Base J = ___' ___" (distance from mast to headstay at deck)

Largest Headsail LP = ___' ___" (shortest right angle distance from luff to clew)

Spinnaker Pole Length SPL = ___' ___"

Spinnaker Length SL = ___' ___" (along longest luff)

Spinnaker Width SW = ___' ___" (maximum width)

6. Modifications: Describe any modification to either the hull or rig from the standard design, including dimension changes.

Mail your entry to:	For Information:	
GLSS P.O. Box 36933 Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236	Tom Munson, President (734) 522-8124 TEMunson@aol.com	Patrick Nugent, Race Chairman (989) 631-9932 PJNugent@cris.com