



The
**SOLO
CHALLENGER**

*The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded
Society
Spring 2012*

Officers:

President: Paul Nickerson
Vice President: Rick McLaren
Treasurer: Jon Jacobs
Corresponding Secretary/Editor: Bill Tucker
Recording Secretary: Mike Spence

Directors:

Arch van Meter
Adrian van den Hoven
Eric Thomas
Ken Verhaeren

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From the Helm

By Paul Nickerson, GLSS President

As our boats are all ready for the sailing season it's time to finalize plans for GLSS Challenge participation. Mackinac Island awaits for the Port Huron and Chicago MACs which start on June 23rd. This year we will be tracking the Challenges with SPOT and the GLSS has a great offer on SPOTs to help us with future tracking and your own personal use. See the SPOT article in this issue. Registration and payment for all events is available on the GLSS Website www.solosailors.com so just click on the link and get registered today.

The Lake Ontario 300 Challenge is also a great event and although there may be 8 locks between Ontario and the rest of the Great Lakes the event is as good as any on the Great Lakes, yes even the MACs. If you can't make it this year put it in your plans for the future.

The Lake Erie Challenge is in its 6th year and continues to grow. There is no feeling like turning Seneca Shoal Buoy at Buffalo and then thinking, "Only 60 miles back to Erie!" The Lake Erie Challenge has never disappointed us for challenging conditions and great camaraderie thanks to the North Cape and Erie Yacht Clubs.

2012 Solo Challenger Events

- ❖ **June 23** Port Huron to Mackinac Isl. Solo Challenge & Chicago to Mackinac Isl. Solo Challenge
- ❖ **July 21** Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenge
- ❖ **August 4** Superior 600 Solo Challenge
- ❖ **August 18** Erie Solo Challenge

See the GLSS website at www.solosailors.org for more details and entry forms.

Articles on 2012

Solo Challenges Experiences Wanted!

Bill Tucker
btucker@alum.calberkeley.org
586-469-1431

New for the GLSS this year is another “Super Challenge”. The sailors on Lake Superior couldn’t wait 2 years between the Trans Superior Challenge so they came up with the Superior 600. Unique for this event is it offers multiple starting points so boats sail similar courses and distances but can start and finish close to their home port. If you are going up to Lake Superior you can start and finish at Whitefish Bay. Of course you can enjoy some extra time on Lake Superior for some great cruising.

A couple of news items from the Board... our application is in with the IRS for 501 C(3) status. This has taken a while because the structure of the GLSS has grown covering multiple states and corporate complexities but with that all done, it’s in the hands of the IRS. Thanks to Rick McLaren for spearheading the legal aspects of this move and we hope to have a decision in the next couple of months.

On the Required Equipment List the Board made several changes. First off we unified the list for applicability to challenges and eliminate conflicts in the Notices of Race. One major change was made to allow Skippers to choose between a life raft and a survival suit combined with personal locator beacon. Quite frankly, all three is the best idea. Ultimately this should be the skipper’s decision so that is where we are at, the choice is yours. Make sure you review the Required Equipment List. With the discount purchases of SPOTs available to the MAC participants this year, we will be adding them to the Required Equipment List for the MACs in the future. First let me thank some members who have anonymously helped cover the costs of the SPOTs. With more SPOTs in our fleets we can offer tracking for all events at a more reasonable cost in future years. Remember, to get out and promote the GLSS and recruit new participants. Please don’t hesitate to contact me or any other Board members if you have any comments or questions.

Hope to see many of you at Mackinac!

Paul’s e-mail: Paul@nicknack.us
Paul’s Phone: 440.476.5368

Tracking with the SPOT

By Paul Nickerson

In 2011 I (no my wife) decided to purchase a SPOT II for tracking and emergency use. This seemed to be the perfect way to have family and friends follow me at a reasonable cost and it had an emergency locator mode. SPOT consists of the device itself which sends out a signal and a service account which puts your data online. Once you own the SPOT it’s yours forever. The service account must be renewed on an annual basis. The SPOT device is very simple. Power it up and it finds your location through the built in GPS. There are then a couple of buttons to push and activate the various modes. Some of these functions are controlled by the service account which will determine things like who gets sent emails. It is import to remember the SPOT does all of its data through satellites, NOT WiFi. This gives it capabilities around the globe so it is not limited to your boat. It is powered by 3 AAA Lithium batteries and using mine a lot including a MAC and the Lake Erie Challenge including deliveries I was on my 3rd set of batteries in one year.

The first function is the OK button. This simply sends a message determined by the SPOT that says you are fine along with your position to a list of people that you program with your account. The list is limited to 10 accounts but you can include things like Facebook and Twitter. So your friends on Facebook or followers on Twitter will all get the message if you wish or just an email list. The message includes a link to your current position which will come up on Google Earth and show people where you are.

The Custom Message button is similar to the OK button but allows you to send a more personalized message to a list. This personalized message is programmable in the account but not from the SPOT. Mine just includes a link to my tracking page (which we’ll get to later) as you are limited in characters and the tracking page link is very long. Here’s mine <http://share.findmespot.com/shared/faces/viewspots.jsp?glld=0nYRDCV21dZOI4PWsQQO1Wged8gxdgtixp> and it can be programmed to include any tracking in the last 7 to 30 days.

Another function that is available is the Help Button. This is not the SOS button but a separate function which

can automatically notify a towing service like Boat US that you need help. There is an additional fee for some of these services but the button can also be programmed just to notify someone you have an issue. Mine is simply set up to notify my family to call me on my cell phone.

Next is the Tracking Button. When active it sends your position every 10 minutes to your tracking page where folks can follow you. The tracking button will only remain active for 24 hours as a battery saver function, so you must send a message or turn tracking on and off to keep it from going into a sleep mode.

Finally is the SOS button. Activating this notifies Coast Guard and International Search and Rescue and you can designate a Primary and Secondary contact.

That's the basics of the SPOT II device. Now I'll try to explain what I understand about the Internet setup and account you will need. To activate your SPOT you will need to go to the www.findmespot.com site and create an account which basically activates a service subscription. It is here you register and enter contact data and messages. Jot down your account information because you will need it later. This area also controls which data will appear on your personal tracking page so you can also set filters to show the last 24 hours, 7 days, or 30 days. You will need to create a shared page to be able to send the web location (which is permanent) to your friends to view. My understanding is that the tracking companies get access to your account to read your position data and then use that in their tracking software.

Another part of a SPOT account is the www.spotadventures.com site. I have never figured out the full usage of this site but again you set up an account and think of this as a blog and social network account, sort of a Facebook type account. You can set up a profile with picture and as much information as you wish. I'm not big on the social networking thing but I have done a little bit of playing with this site to try to figure things out. You can create an adventure and have people follow you while you post notes and pictures. You can also go back into your account and collect positions and create adventures. Here are my adventures that I made for the 2011 Lake Erie Challenge http://www.spotadventures.com/trip/view?trip_id=275212 and the 2011 Port Huron Mac http://www.spotadventures.com/trip/view?trip_id=263887 and you will notice there are speed and distance

graphs available. The SPOT does not send out speed and direction information so these are computed by the software.

Another aspect of the Spot Adventures site is that anyone can go there and "Find Adventures" etc. Go to www.spotadventures.com and the "Find Adventures" and search for "Nicknack" and you should find my adventures. Enter "sailing" and you find all the adventures with sailing as a keyword and you can see some have posted pictures and comments. If you are registered you can log in and post or create adventures or groups. You can create or join a group and post your adventure within a group. Not knowing just how this worked I created a GLSS group and posted some of my adventures there. I do not profess to be an expert on the capabilities and part of that is I have not been part of an active group and avoid social networks as a rule. One thing to remember is that SPOT is not designed just for sailing and that sailors are in fact a small part of the market. It is a great tool but if you are looking at the blogging and adventure aspects more people may find Facebook a better or more familiar alternative. Plus, this is a relatively new part of SPOT usage and people are still figuring out its capabilities. When I sail singlehanded, which is often several days a week after work, I always turn the SPOT on and track so my wife can follow as I'm always on the open waters of Lake Erie. It's also great for the deliveries to and from GLSS Challenges whether it's a cruise or just flat out getting somewhere. I have not seen SPOT software which integrates nautical charts, but Google Earth is a good alternative for the public.

For all the other safety gear we carry for GLSS events, I think if you look at the SPOT as a safety tool first that it is a great value and how you use the web tracking and other aspects is just an add on bonus.

Editor's Note:

Dick Lappin has done 26 Port Huron Solo Macs, 1 Chicago Solo Mac and 3 Solo Trans Superior Races. His 27 foot C&C, Ginger Kay is beautifully maintained and sailed with great professionalism. I asked Dick to talk about his experience as a GLSS sailor over the years. Here is his history lesson.

Personal Observations of the Early Years of the GLSS Port Huron to Mackinac Solo

By Dick Lappin

I wasn't in the first 1979 challenge, but two from my 32 boat club in Caseville were, including the first president of the Society, Michael Richmond. I initially can remember thinking that a solo sail to Mackinac didn't sound all that attractive. Little did I know that I would get hooked, but good. The PH-Mack Solo became a hot topic at my club, with as many as seven participants from HYC in later years. My first recollection was in 1980 of Nick Gresock, who came speeding into the club at Caseville in a car the Sunday after the PH start. He came to pick up a spare auto-pilot. He had pulled into Harrisville and gotten a car ride back to Caseville to get a spare. Obviously, the rules about outside assistance hadn't been refined at that time.

I entered my first Solo in 1981. I had strained my back a few weeks prior to the start. I made it to Port Huron with the boat but had to withdraw due to debilitating back spasms.

Boy was I off to a good start. 1982 was my first completion. I remember heading into a dense fog bank off Stoneport alongside my good friend Mike Elliott. We were fogged in all night, which turned very cold. With no electronic navigation, I headed north to get away from land. It was so great to clear out of the fog, like getting out of jail, that I continued north to within sight of Martin Reef Light which of course, added to my elapsed time. Thus, I began a four year apprenticeship to Fred Locke (also with a C&C27), who was the master mariner of the GLSS at that time. Fred is an excellent sailor who had experienced all parts of the Lake both day and night in his many crewed Bayview/Mackinac races; a good thing to know prior to the days of Loran.

It should be mentioned that there were rumors about some of the early icons in the PH Solo. Jim Douglas was rumored to put on pajamas at night. Larry Rotta

stopped during the race to visit a girlfriend in Rogers City; I later found out he married her. Nick Gresock always sailed close past Duck Island, Ca. Some of us, including Tom Munson (off-course in the vicinity of Martin Reef Light) and myself (sailing in thin water at Cordwood Point) had interesting experiences due to extended "rest periods". I found out years after the fact, that a very polite sailor refused assistance from a friend of mine when in the water pushing off from grounding north of Rogers City, my home port; how about that Mark Gutteridge.

Electronic navigation was prohibited prior to 1985. There was quite a debate about allowing it. I can remember my friend Luke Goyette (Grampion 34, Lu-C-M) remarking that all we needed was to allow the Solo Race to be sailed double handed with Loran. We were at that time considering allowing doubleheaders into the GLSS. Fortunately, Loran C was allowed; doubleheaders, not. This made a big difference in navigating. I can remember Dave Evans, prior to 1985, sailing almost all the way around the wrong side of Bois Blanc Island before retracing to finish correctly. I did the same thing to a lesser degree. It was difficult to determine ones exact position in the upper lake after crashing and bashing for 200 miles.

Mention needs to be made of the infamous 1992 Challenge, otherwise known as the "Batman Race". The weather matched predictions with strong northerly winds (max into the 40's), rain and very cold nights (temps in the mid 30's, some even claimed ice on the deck). The final results were 12 finished out of 34 starting. Some returned to Port Huron. Several dropped out in Goderich, including Al Merrithew, Dave Evans, Wayne Gould, Jim Ratliff and others. I retired in Harbor Beach. Peter Strickland, our Goderich liason, made a car available to the Goderich guys who headed off to the local theater (Batman showing) to make the best of a bad situation; nothing wrong with having a little fun, eh! Evans, Gould and Ratliff restarted and finished, despite the weather remaining difficult into Monday AM. Several of us DNF's motored up to Mackinac to enjoy the festivities.

I've had over 30 years of very memorable experiences participating in these GLSS singlehanded races including:

1. Finishing my first race in 1982
2. Losing to Fred Locke in 1985 by one minute (45h, 26m, actual) in my quickest time

3. 1986 Beating Fred Locke
4. 1987 Bashing and crashing up the lake to be only one of the 10 finishers out of 31 starters
5. 1990 Receiving the Peter Fisher Award
6. 1991 Put a kerosene heater on the boat; tired of freezing on cold nights
7. 1992 The Batman race; another gut buster
8. 1993 Dodger time; tired of "green water cockpit baths"
9. 1995 Sailing alongside Jim Douglas (Tartan 34, Ruwach III) on a beautiful moonlit night and agreeing to stand alternate lookout watches
10. Late 1990's- Mackinac Island pub crawls which were perfected by Pat Nugent
11. 2001 Chicago Mac Race; great time in Chicago
12. 2005 My first Trans-Superior

Through all this, I have had wonderful experiences, met and cherished great friends and paid attention to sailing in a safe and seaman-like manner. I have also developed the following philosophy: **Never sail past Mackinac Island.**

The Superior 600 Super Race

By Bill Tucker

The Superior 600 is a new race and will be run for the first time this year. It is intended to be run on even numbered years while the Trans Superior race is run on odd number years. It is unique from several perspectives:

- It will be the second longest race in the Great lakes at 615 nautical miles. (The Super Mac and Back is still the longest.)
- You can enter this race as a single hander, double hander, or as a crewed boat.
- This race will have four separate but simultaneous starting points: Superior, Wisconsin; the Apostle Islands, Wisconsin; Whitefish Point, and Thunder Bay Ontario. Boats will finish at the same point they started. All boats will start at the same time and each course measures 615 nautical miles.

Documents for this race have been posted on the GLSS web site at www.solosailors.org/sup600.php

for the single handed version and for the double handed and crewed version go the Superior 600 web site at www.superior600.com. Both web sites include a plot showing all 4 race courses superimposed on a chart of Lake Superior. This will certainly be a unique race.

Editor's Note:

Ken Verhaeren has completed 6 Chicago Solo Macs and the 2008 Super Mac and Back from the Chicago side. Ken is a member of the GLSS Board. It hasn't always been smooth sailing as his article below tells of the challenges he has faced.

Not in the Plan

By Ken Verhaeren

My first Mac Challenge was in 2005 and one thing that was not in my plans was the dreaded call in to the race committee, "this is Kismet – I am dropping out of the race." My plan was to get to the island no matter how long it would take. It would be interesting to know the finishing percentage of 1st timer's verses members. My guess is that it is much higher for the sailors trying to join the GLSS family. Finishing that 1st challenge still ranks as my most important sailing accomplishment and more important to me than my Super Mac & Back finish. It was the one that got me in the group. My second challenge was just about as exciting as the first. Could I do it again? I did not want to be a one timer. Dropping out was still not in my vocabulary. Just get there by Wednesday for lunch. Well the weather had other plans for me. As I drifted west of Ludington Tuesday morning, I wondered if the wind would ever start moving Kismet toward the island. By noon I was plotting how long it would take me to motor to the island. At 1400 I made that call. GLSS RACE COMMITTEE THIS IS KISMET! OK, I didn't call in on the radio; I was too far away to get anyone on the island. The cell phone would do the job. Nor could I motor in, I was more than 24 hours out at 6 knots. So into Pentwater I went feeling devastated that I couldn't get it done. But it was the lack of wind, not me or Kismet right!

From 2007 until 2011 the challenges went very well for me. I finished all of the challenges in varying positions. Getting in after the luncheon one year but only losing 3rd place by about 45 minutes. I had benefited in a

couple of the challenges by other entrants that made that dreaded call. One year I jumped up three boats when others didn't wait for the wind to come back. But last year was different. After a difficult night of getting into and out of the Manatou Passage I was fighting into NNE winds to get to Gray's Reef. Early in the day they were in the teens, by 1245 I was watching a big storm front coming toward me from the SW. As we moved into the afternoon the winds were in the mid-twenties and then into the mid-thirties. Winds in the 20's aren't bad and reefing down works for the 30's, but the seas were getting more and more difficult. Tacking back and forth trying to move closer to the reef was getting to be more and more of a problem. I was looking for the wind to shift to the east and as the wind speed rose, it started to move. Because of the pitching and rolling of the boat charging the batteries was also an issue. Around 1900 the winds were around 35 knots, sea state confused and I needed to charge my batteries. That is when I heard the metallic sound from the engine area and immediately shut down the engine. I had been running the engine to charge the batteries, but they were not fully charge. As Kismet was bouncing around I knew I was the last racer on the course. Four hours earlier Rhapsody dropped out because of the conditions and things had only been getting worse. Listening to the weather confirmed that the wind was turning and soon I was moving, with difficulty, directly toward the Reef. About 2000 I heard the forecast for the wind to start blowing from the east to about 50 knots. I was about 12 miles from the Reef but not making more than 4 knots because of the seas. I'd be going through the reef at night and then down the Straits into a wind around 50 kts. I've done that in 30 kt winds and it's not fun, it took me 9 hours to go the distance between the island and the Reef. So now I'm thinking about that dreaded call again. I'm within 40 miles of the island and I'm thinking about dropping out. How can this be? This time it really would be my decision, there certainly was wind. Possibly no engine, increasing winds up to possibly 50 kts on the nose and a skipper who has had little sleep over the past 24 hours. Adding all of these things together, I saw a recipe for serious mistakes and problems. It was time to call, "RACE COMMITTEE RACE COMMITTEE this is KISMET". After the call, I turned and headed south. My 2011 Challenge was over but getting to a safe place was just starting. As it got dark I turned on my masthead navigation lights only to find that no lights came on. It was now pouring rain with the boat moving all over the place. I crawled to the bow and set up my backup lights hanging on for all I was worth. Not

long after I was back in the cockpit my GPS antenna was ripped off by a line rendering my chart plotter useless. So with the engine shut down, the boat moving all over the place, no GPS & chart plotter and using my emergency navigation lights (at least that saved some battery life) I was dead reckoning my way south. Who says this isn't fun! At 0400 the next morning I anchored off Northport just inside Grand Traverse Bay. Extremely tired I took a long nap and then got everything back together and went to Frankfort to wait for my friends to arrive from the island.

So what did I learn from this exercise in frustration? The first thing I felt was that unlike the 2006 Challenge, I chose to drop out this time and felt real blame. There was wind, I could sail! I just gave up! After some rest, tied up to the dock at Jacobson's Marina, I started to analyze my decision. There are many reasons people drop out. For current members it maybe that they've done it before and don't feel they need the aggravation. Problems that could be solved become the reason to head in. Most often it is because of a problem unsolvable with what the skipper has at hand. Broken forestays, water pump that stop working and autopilots that give up the ghost. In my case, it was an evaluation that conditions were moving to a level that I did not feel comfortable with. To choose to continue into a predicted 50 kt headwind did not make sense for any number of reasons. Continuing into the night with a boat decreasing in battery levels and an engine I thought was not working properly would only compounded the problem. I knew that my energy level, currently low, would only get worse tacking down the Straits. This is when serious mistakes occur. To my mind, this is when you really prove if you are a competent skipper. You evaluate the situation and make a decision in line with your skills. Heading south away from the storm though not in the plan was the better option.

Today's Technology for Sailing **The WiFi Age and your sailboat**

By Paul Nickerson

Many sailors today have smart phones or tablets or may be looking at that technology in the near future. In the summer of 2011 I purchased a Motorola Xoom with Verizon WiFi. To be quite honest, I didn't know exactly what I was buying and these things are a continuous

learning process. For those who are new to tablets and smart phones there several operating systems but the 2 we'll cover here because they apply to phones and tablets are the Android operating system by Google and the I-Pad and I-Phones by Apple.

Apple is Apple and there are no oranges to compare it to. The Android operating system is found in products by many Manufacturers whose products vary. WiFi capability including 4G and what wireless company, external memory cards and internal features like built in GPS and a barometer are just a few things to consider. I had my Xoom for six months before I discovered while searching for an app that it had a barometer built in. That brings us to the world of apps. Apps are not to be confused with computers and software. Typically they are designed to do specific functions and you don't have a lot of control but many do what they do very well. Lets also mention here that you can also buy a wireless WiFi unit for your laptop computer and have its use available online from your boat. I use mine for long trips but for shorter sails I don't have it on the boat all the time.

Software and Apps, what are the differences? Software may do a lot more in some ways but maybe it's almost too much for everyday use. I have Rose Point Coastal Commander navigation software in my laptop which requires a USB GPS receiver to be interfaced. I also have an AIS receiver which interfaces into it. Now we're building a system of components. Where the tablets excel is they have a lot of things built into them like the GPS. Another thing is that many apps are free or ridiculously cheap.

Let's start with accessing the Web through a browser. The perfectly programmed website will output its video in varied formats depending on what device is viewing it. The Android/Google devices run a variation of the Google Chrome browser. Since website programming is constantly changing and the devices viewing it are changing it is hard to find perfect websites. In general the higher resolution the screen of your device the better luck you'll have. Also, many websites will load slower on WiFi because of data speeds and site complexity.

Since Apps are written for specific products they tend to function a little bit better. There are millions of apps on the market and not all are perfectly written by high end software companies. Many of them are written by someone with a special interest in a function. There are a million weather apps but when my electronic barometer died I searched for a barometer app. There were only a couple but there was one that was perfect

for my Xoom. A quick download and I now have a free app which tracks barometric pressure. Many apps have the capability of making a donation to the developer and many range in price from \$1 to \$5.

Next in line was a good radar weather app. I can get to National Weather service sites and there are Weather Bug and others but what I found I like best is an app available from many TV stations. Now I just happen to work at a TV station in Cleveland with the most accurate forecasts... but our weather app is a WSI product and available in many markets. Different markets mostly mean that when you start the app that it centers on that market area. The great thing about the WSI weather app is that it enhances weather cell activity and shows projected paths. You can zoom in and out and pan around the country from any home area. These can also run in the background and sound an alarm.

For navigation there is also a large choice. When I first got the Xoom the major software vendors did not have compatible Android versions. I found a free app that used the GPS and showed your position over a chart. Very plain and simple but it did not track charts so you had to change charts as you moved between areas or wanted more details. There are also other GPS function apps not meant to be nautical that just show speed and direction and some I have found that have an email / share function that will email your position to someone along with a message.

The mother of all Navigation Apps is from Navionics but there may be others I'm not aware of now. This is the most expensive app I ever bought at \$15. It is a full navigation app with most of the features you would expect on any GPS or chart plotter. It runs on vector charts which track where you are and in the Great Lakes version includes all the Great Lakes charts at one price. You do have to download the charts for the areas you want. You can also overlay satellite or road view with the marine charts. There is now a community layer where people can put in comments.

There's other apps you may find interesting like the Google Sky celestial navigator. Point your device at the sky and it will identify the constellations and planets. There's an evolving world of apps and you can always write your own if you are so inclined.

One thing to remember, these are not perfect devices and they run on land based WiFi for which you need a monthly plan but you may already have that anyway. The built in GPS dependent apps run anywhere. One drawback is that many of the screens are not bright enough to work with in sunlight. They draw very little power and the batteries last many hours and if you plug them into your 12 volt system they draw a partial amp.

Editor's Note:

It is always encouraging to see solo sailors giving a hand to others including other sailors and just mere mortals. The following two articles show where GLSS sailors have offered assistance. In one case the assistance was ignored with very positive results and in the second the assistance was accepted with somewhat negative results.

John Murphy - Speech at the 2011 AGM

I can't believe that I am here. But the beauty of this moment is that each one of you skippers know what I am feeling right now.

For me, becoming a member required a great deal of preparation; the boat, the equipment and most importantly, self.

My preparation began in 2007. I felt that after 28 years of cruising the Great Lakes that I was capable of taking on the challenge. I approached Dave Evans and talked to him about what the challenge entailed. Dave's words of encouragement were 'we don't blank-blank want you!' In 2008 I approached David once again. Gingerly, I once again asked him questions about the challenge. David's response was more considered. 'We -don't -want -you. Forget it! You're a L-D-M-F!'

I once again approached Dave in 2009 and to my surprise his response was 'so, are you doing the solo this year you L-D-M-F?'

In 2010, I questioned David why I needed to spend \$600.00 on flares for the solo. David's response was 'you L-D-M-F! We don't want you! You'll never be capable of doing the challenge!' Fortunately, Bobby Reaume overheard the conversation and pulled me off to the side and stated 'why are you listening to him? He's English! You're more than qualified to do the challenge!'

And so in that year, I completed my 100 mile qualifier and submitted my log to Mr. Evans for review and approval. Apparently, David struggled with my qualifier. He stated 'You L-D-M-F! I don't know what to do. You're supposed to sail to Cleveland & back!' I stated, 'you L-D-M-F! I did my 24 hours and 100 miles running between the Detroit River and Pelee Passage, back & forth in 30 knots of air coming from the north! F--- o--!'

In 2011, I started working on the boat, working on the equipment and working on self. And so in August 2011, at approximately 10:00 I qualified myself to become a member of the Great Lakes Single-Handed Society.

On crossing the line I was visited by your wonderful Homeland Security officers. And so from approximately 10:30 till 2:30 in the morning I was questioned by 14 various officers, who requested that I produce numerous documents, most of which I didn't have a clue what they were talking about. The boat was searched from stem to stern, questioned as to why I had knives on the boat, why I had 3 foul-weather gears when I was the only one on the boat and what I was going to do with all these extra ropes!

Lessons learned: never refer to any Homeland Security Officer as a L-D-M-F! It violates some kind of procedural rule and they all have to draw their guns on ya. Never ask them if you look like a bleep-bleep terrorist. That statement requires them to unclip their guns in readiness. Never, ever say 'what are you? Brand-new?' That requires 3 officers to search your boat from stem to stern.

And so, at approximately 3 AM, I arrived at the docks of the Erie Yacht Club. And to my surprise, coming to the dock many of the single-handed skippers were there to greet me, take my lines and secure the boat. Before the boat was even tied off, David jumped from the dock, into the cockpit and gave me a hearty handshake and stated 'You are no longer a L-D-M-F! Congratulations! You did a great job pal!'

And so in closing, I would like to thank those society members who encouraged me, assisted me and offered so much advise. I'd like to thank, Paul Nickerson, Dave Evans, Bobby Reaume and each skipper who participated in the 2011 Lake Erie Solo Challenge.

The Ticket Machine

By Bill Tucker

In the summer of 2011 I participated in the Ontario 300. To get to the start at the Port Credit Yacht Club on the north shore of Lake Ontario I needed to pass through the Welland Canal and its eight locks. The cost for pleasure boat passage through the locks is \$200 each way. This is collected using a credit card through a ticket vending machine in a small booth located ashore at each end of the canal before you enter the first lock.

As I approached the ticket machine on the lake Erie side of the canal a lady ahead of me was attempting to obtain a ticket. She appeared to be struggling with figuring out how the ticket machine worked. As this was my second passage through the canal and I also had had difficulty figuring out the machine I offered to help. The lady agreed and I soon obtained her ticket for passage through the Welland Canal.

The lady thanked me and explained that the ticket machine in the nearby booth for obtaining parking tickets was out of order. I then realized that I had helped her obtain a \$200 ticket for canal passage rather than a \$2 ticket for parking! I sheepishly explained the situation to the lady and suggested that she contact the credit card company for a refund. I am sure she wishes she had not accepted my assistance.

Winter Solo Challenger Quiz Errata

The Winter Solo Challenger included the answers to the Solo Challenger Quiz. Blair Arden pointed out to me that in Question 10 The Port Huron Mac also starts in Canadian Waters on the east side of the Port Huron Shipping Channel.

Want to contact contributors or board members?

Phone numbers and e-mail addresses for Board Members and contributors can be found in the member's only section of the GLSS web site. Also Board Members, Race Chairs, etc. can be contacted through the "Contact Us" button on the left side of the GLSS home page.

www.solosailors.org