



Solo Challenger



Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society

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Summer 2002

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It seems such a short time ago that we were all scrambling to get our boats prepared and shipshape for the Solo Challenge. It's hard to believe the Challenge is well behind us and we're more than half way through the summer. Now it's time to fill out and mail your entry forms for the Lower Huron Solo, the Michigan Scramble and the St. Clair Solo. These races are a very important part of the GLSS program. Many of our new members were introduced to the GLSS through these events. Your participation in these races and encouragement to the newcomers is vitally important to the interests and continued growth of the GLSS. Please contact Mark Gutteridge for the Lower Huron Solo, Jim McLaren for the Michigan Scramble and Dan Pavlat for the St. Clair Solo.

We had a top-notch Race Chairman for the Solo Challenge and Super Mac this year. These events and their countless details were handled competently and efficiently. On behalf of the Board of Directors and all members of the GLSS, I would like to

thank Pat Nugent and his committee for a job well done and a race well run. The Awards Luncheon as always was a special occasion and it's due in large part to the camaraderie between the members of the GLSS. The encouragement and support extended to one another is a real tribute to this outstanding and distinctive organization. Pat will be giving you a review of the Solo Challenge elsewhere in this newsletter but, again, on behalf of the Board and GLSS members, it's a great pleasure to welcome the 6 new finishers of the Solo Challenge to the Society and congratulate them on their remarkable accomplishment. Also, our congratulations to the 6 sailors who completed the Super Mac – what an achievement!

Next year is the 25th Anniversary of the GLSS. We gotta have a party!

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The Board would like your suggestions and comments as to how this significant event should be celebrated. It has been suggested that some of our members who are no longer comfortable sailing solo might be allowed to race with a crew to the Island. Of course, there would be a reunion/anniversary party at the Island where everyone can share the tall tales and amazing stories (as can only be told by “old salts”) of the early days in the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society. We want to reach as many of our members as possible but have lost track of several. If you know the address, telephone number or e-mail of anyone who is no longer listed in the roster, please forward that information to me and don't forget to send along your suggestions for the anniversary celebration. By the way, make a note of June 21, 2003 – next year's Solo Challenge.

Hope you're all having a terrific summer and enjoying great times at the helm.

Tom Munson

Race Chairman's Report – The Huron Side

June 15 marked the start of the 24th Port Huron-to-Mackinac Solo and the 6th Chicago-to-Mackinac Solo. The paperwork, phone calls and last minute details seemed insignificant as boats began leaving the dock and heading for the starting line. All of a sudden, it looked too easy! The plan was coming together! Two separate starting lines –

hundreds of miles away – were organizing a rendezvous on Mackinac Island.

Jean Webb and the yacht *Jaclyn* coordinated the Lake Huron start. Nineteen solo competitors answered the starter's cannon. Conditions were near perfect! A warm westerly breeze at 5-10 knots gave way to spinnaker starts for each of the four monohull fleets. However, by late afternoon, the wind had clocked to the northwest with an added chill in the air. Most of the fleet was planning to round the Goderich mark by nightfall. An added bonus for the GLSS this year was the VHF presence of *Sea Gypsy* (Robert Baechler) who confirmed mark roundings from Goderich Yacht Club. Thank you Robert!

The Goderich mark was more than a turning point of the course this year. It was also a turning point for the weather. By 10:00 PM, the winds had picked up to 15-20 knots out of the north-northwest. It was cool, damp and misty with 3-foot seas. The prospect of crossing the lake “on the nose” (combined with miscellaneous mechanical & electrical problems) prompted the early retirement of 5 competitors during this first leg: *Aurora Zen*, *Jalapeno*, *Candide*, *Black Diamond* and *Ruwach III*. All announced their early withdrawal from the Solo Challenge.

At the midnight radio check-in, Kevin Hogan of *Kintaro* announced, “I don't know if I have ever seen it so black before!” Our weather system was acting out its forecast like a script. The wind was steady, cool and brisk while blowing from the north-northwest. By

noon on Sunday, apparent winds reached a constant 30 knots with regular gusts to 35. This steady wind combined with bow-spray and an occasional shower lasted from noon to midnight. By daybreak on Monday morning, the apparent wind speed dropped to 20 knots – finally a relief at 20 knots!!! However, the unfavorable conditions had contributed to four more withdrawals: *Black Magic, Odyssey, Foxfire and Charisma*. The wind remained “on the nose” to the finish! We were envious of our “Chicago-side” competitors who were most likely enjoying a fast reach to the Island!

Cheryl Cameron of *C-Spray* was the first to cross the line at approximately 1:00 AM on Monday morning. Only 9 more competitors remained who turned in finish times through the day up to approximately 8:00 PM. To our surprise, our Chicago companions had not reached the Island! Lake Michigan was influence by a completely different weather system characterized by light and variable winds!

After a long (2-hour!) nap combined with the appropriate blend of barley & hops, phase-II of the Solo Challenge was well underway. Now that both Michigan & Huron competitors were on dry land, wave heights were reported to be in excess of 15-feet. Wind speeds had been clocked above 90 knots. And temperatures were recorded in the single digits! However, the most sobering report was straightforward with no room for exaggeration. Cal Karr rescued Fred Ball who had been stranded on his capsized multihull for 12-hours. Cal, we salute you for answering one of the highest calls of a sailor.

At the annual awards luncheon, the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society was proud to invite six new members into its fold: John Ayres, Mike Murray, Larry Peterson, Todd Scott, Eric Thomas & David Wagner. Eric Thomas and David Wagner each received “The President’s Trophy” for their respective finishes on the Huron and Michigan sides for having the best overall corrected times for a new member. Pat Nugent was honored with the Peter Fisher Memorial Award.

The Board of Directors met briefly and confirmed the date for next year’s Mackinac Solo Challenge. Mark your calendars for the start: June 21, 2003.

Patrick Nugent

2002 Inaugural Chicago to Port Huron Super Mac

If you have never sailed a Mac Solo out of Chicago I would highly recommend it. A skippers meeting on the 370 foot Abegweit, Columbia Yacht Club’s unique clubhouse, with all the Lake Michigan Solo and first time skippers set the stage for the combined Chicago Mac Solo and the first ever Chicago to Port Huron Super Mac.

The dramatic backdrop of the skyline along with a steady soft breeze and intermittent sunshine sent twenty one skippers off in one quick start. Although the 200 plus mile rhumb line could be laid to the Manitou Passage a few skippers opted to favor the western shoreline. An afternoon thunderstorm had all of us scrambling to reduce sail

and later kept the radio alive with weather and radar reports from the front of the fleet as localized storms rolled through. As the sun set that evening, the glow of Chicago was still very visible astern. With the VHF scanning 16, 72 and the common freighter channels a surprise transmission was received at 02:50 Sunday between the Coast Guard and Kal Karr on Belle. Kal had picked Fred Ball off the overturned 50' trimaran Lucretia. Fred had been hit by one of the intense squalls eleven hours earlier and had waited on the overturned hulls through most of the night. As more information on the capsize and rescue spread through the fleet there was a sigh of relief that this story had a happy ending. We all paid very close attention to the weather reports the next afternoon as a repeat performance of thunderstorms rolled down the lake.

By sunset Sunday we were all wishing for thunderstorms or wind of any velocity as the wind died and the fleet slowed to a crawl with a momentary peak of five knot winds over the next twenty hours. Decision time came as each skipper neared South Manitou and the radio discussions began anew - "You going inside or outside? Is there air in there? Don't even try it! I think I should have gone the other way. Wait, the wind is filling in. Oops I guess not, down to triple zeros again!!! More *&#@^ flies!!!" The discussions went on for hours but we all had plenty of time as we drifted under the Sleeping Bear sand dunes.

This area of the lake has no parallel on the Huron Solo course. You pass between the Manitous, Fox, Beaver Garden etc Islands to port and the sand dunes or the Lower Peninsula bays to

starboard. With the flat seas and strong sun it was spectacular scenery with the culmination at Greys Reef. Picture yourself after 300 miles of solo sailing, approaching an area where the chart is littered with symbols for bouys, lighthouses, more than one horn, all sorts of shallows and what appears to be a slot the width of a needle that is the safe zone. Did I mention that you are on a beat, it is 02:00 on a moonless overcast night and the chart shows a few unlit buoys among the flashers and lets throw in a few freighters plying the same slot. . Lake Huron sailors, you need to try this at least once!

It is now Tuesday morning and the wind has died again, you can see the Mac bridge but can do nothing but try to coax the knot log to register an actual number. We float for several hours before the wind comes up out of the East quickly building to twenty knots and the boats charge for the island.

It is now decision time for seven skippers. As you cross the finish line and hear the greeting "Congratulations and welcome to Machinac Island" from the sirens of the finish line committee. You are drawn to the island where you can sleep uninterrupted, where there are no freighters but there is cold beer, warm food, showers and many of your friends and fellow skippers. Instead you hear yourself say into the VHF "It is my intent to continue on to Port Huron to complete the Super Mac". Six skippers make that announcement.

After passing the Bois Blanc light we feel that we are truly in Lake Huron, leaving the island behind. It is no longer a race but a true endurance test. You settle into a routine, with night and day

seemingly inconsequential, only the position on the chart represents a passage of time. For the next fifty hours the wind blows out of the southeast directly up the rhumb line. At times dropping below 15 but always returning into the twenties with waves to match. The cadence of the boat going to windward in the waves is mesmerizing. The heel of the boat dictates when to reef, reef again or shake a reef out. There are no other adjustments; the working jib is all that the boat will allow all the way to the Goderich turning mark. The wind keeps the flies away during the day and the night sky is clear and spectacular with an occasional shooting star. By now life feels normal at 35 degrees of heel and you feel that you could sail this way for another month. But as we close on Port Huron the winds are out of the southwest, it is before dawn on Friday but the air off the land is so hot it is finally time to shed the Mustang suit and finish the last of the 600 miles in a short sleeve shirt. After rounding the finish buoy you announce your time on the VHF to no one in particular and there is a great feeling of satisfaction in accomplishing the Super Mac Solo.

In predawn light you motor into the Sarnia Yacht Club. Somehow there is absolutely no wind and the scene seems surreal like a neutron bomb has obliterated all living things but left everything else untouched. You realize that you have not seen another human face for over six days, not even your own. Find an open slip, tie up, leave the main and jib spread across the deck, go to sleep.

All six of the skippers that decided to continue on from Machinac Island finished the Super Mac.

Great job to Tony Driza, Mark Gutteridge, Dave Rearick, Mike Silverthorne, and Bob Van Eck.

Note the next Super Mac will be in 2005.

Dan Pavlat

New Course Record Set!

Cheryl Cameron set a new course record for the Superior Division in the recent Port Huron to Mackinac Solo Challenge. Cheryl's time of 38 hours, 44 minutes and 29 seconds eclipses the 1996 record of 39 hours, 46 minutes and 22 seconds. Congratulations, Cheryl!

Web Access to Weather Forecast Models

There are many sources of weather forecast model outputs on the web. One of my favorites is the NOAA Real-time Environmental Applications and Display sYstem (READY). This site lets you choose data from any of the many models in production, to customize the area of output display, and to then choose model output parameters to plot. I use it before every race to see what the models say the wind will be like. Access it at:

www.arl.noaa.gov/ready/cmet.html

Chuck Drummond

**GREAT LAKES SINGLEHANDED SOCIETY
2002 LOWER LAKE HURON SOLO
SEPT. 7TH 2002
Request for Entry**

Name: _____ Date: / /2002

Address: _____ Phone: (day) () _____ (eve) () _____

City/State: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____ Yacht Name: _____

Design: _____ Length: _____ Rig: _____ Hull Color: _____

Sail No: _____ Yacht Registration No: _____ Spinnaker or JAM Only _____

If you do not have a PHRF or Multi-hull rating, please complete the following information. Any omitted data can result in assumptions that may penalize your rating assignment.

LWL Beam Draft Displacement Year Built

Keel: Fixed Fin Full or Centerboard Hull Material _____

Engine: Inboard _____ Outboard _____

Prop: Fixed Folding _____ Feather _____

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

Foretriangle: Height I = _____ (deck to top of headstay) Base J = _____ (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) Cruising chute only

Spinnaker Width SW: ' " (maximum width)

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 of its aforementioned affiliated parties, or any other causes. All persons participation 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. By electing to participate, each participant agrees to hold harmless the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society and its affiliated parties from any loss or damage to persons or property.

Signature of Entrant

Signature of Owner (if different)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ARE:

1. Evidence of liability insurance
2. Copy of PHRF or multi-hull rating certificate (if available).
3. Check for \$15 (U.S. funds)
Excludes cost of dinner
4. If member of USYRU, furnish proof with entry and deduct \$2.00

Mail to:

Mark Gutteridge
608 MICHIGAN AVE
pt.edward ont..
N7V1G7 (519 332-1558)
mgutteridge@suncor.com

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GREAT LAKES SINGLEHANDED SOCIETY
St. Clair SOLO
September 28, 2002
Request for Entry
Late charge after Sep. 21st, No entries after Sept 26th

Name: _____ Date: ___ / ___ /02

E-Mail Address: _____

Address: _____ Phone (___) _____

City/State: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Yacht Name: _____ Design: _____

Length: _____ Rig: _____ Hull Color: _____ Sail No: _____

Yacht Registration No: _____ Check class: JAM ___ PHRF _____ MultiHull _____

Current PHRF rating _____ Note: Roller furling credits are not given in singlehanded racing.

If you do not have a PHRF or Multi-hull rating, please enter your estimated rating here: _____

You will be contacted for additional information and your finalized PHRF rating.

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 of its aforementioned affiliated parties, or any other causes. All persons participation 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)

Mail completed form to:

GLSS - Dan Pavlat
33130 Curtis
Livonia, Michigan 48152

BE SURE TO INCLUDE:

Check for race entry - \$25 (U.S. funds) add \$5 for entries after September 21st

No entries after September 26th. If member of USYRU, furnish proof with entry and deduct \$2.00

Copy of evidence of liability insurance

Copy of PHRF or multi-hull rating certificate.

Notes: Buffet dinner Friday evening prior to the skippers meeting is through Crescent Sail Club.

The "Big AI Steak Roast" where you pick the size of the steak!!!! Sorry no sharing of the dinners. Saturday after the race at NSSC, sponsored by the GLSS. To insure availability Include \$15 in U.S. funds per dinner in your race entry check.

Contacts:

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Pat Nugent (989) 684-8016
Dave Evans (519)979-2492 or (519) 945-5230