

The

# SOLO CHALLENGER



The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society

Summer 2011

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**Solo Challenger Editor Message**

You may have noticed that although this is the “Summer” edition it is no longer summer. I have a great excuse as I sailed the Super Mac & Back plus the three other Solo Challenges this summer. This was about 20 days of great solo racing and about as much time getting to the starts and from the finishes. I have also just returned from a three week mission’s trip in Africa. (I did not sail to Africa.) In any case winter is on the way and so I will have more time to devote to my editor responsibilities.

In this issue is a great article by Wally McMinn on the 2010 Ontario 300 in which we encountered a very severe thunderstorm. Your GLSS Board has also been working to get GLSS designated as a nonprofit organization for tax purposes and we include an update on this issue. A quiz and a little poetic culture have been included.

Articles on the 2011 Solo Challenges will be featured in the next Solo Challenger. Contributions are welcome.

The GLSS AGM will be held in Detroit this year on January 21 so mark your calendars.

Bill Tucker - Editor

**2012 Solo Challenger Events**

- ❖ **January 21** GLSS Annual Meeting in Detroit
- ❖ **June 23** Port Huron to Mackinac Island Solo Challenge & Chicago to Mackinac Island Solo Challenge
- ❖ **July 21** Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenge
- ❖ **August 18** Erie Solo Challenge

See the GLSS website at

<http://www.solosailors.org> for more details and

entry forms.

**Your help needed & appreciated!**

**Send comments, pictures and articles to**

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## **2011 New Members List**

We would like to welcome the following 10 new GLSS members. One becomes a member by completing one of the five Solo Challenges. Once one is a member one is a member for life. (If you don't pay your dues you can't vote but you are still a member.) The President's Cup is presented to the first time Solo Challenger with the best corrected time and is indicated with an \*.

### **2011 Mac Solo Challenge**

Racing from Port Huron, Dave Kember\* and racing from Chicago, Rick Stage\*

### **2011 Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenge**

John Ball, Michael Cullen, Brian Mitchell, Ted Spanos\*, Jan Steyn, and Jason Smyth

### **2011 Lake Erie Solo Challenge**

Jeff Benson \* and John Murphy

## **The 2010 Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenge**

### **"WEATHER EVENT"**

**Wally McMinn**  
**October 2010**

All GLSS Challenge events are inherently difficult, characterized by weather and many other uncertainties. The 2010 LO300SC was unique in terms of the severity of a weather event which moved across the fleet early in the regatta. From most reports, a series of three squalls hit the fleet as they passed Toronto and continued eastbound toward Main Duck Island along the north shore of Lake Ontario. Each was characterized by high winds, with 35 knots reported from the first and third line squalls, and reports of 50-60 knot winds in the second of the cells.

Eleven of the seventeen solo participants were kind enough to submit reports of their experience. These provide the basis of this summary. They were

asked to comment on several specific questions, as well as offer any other observations they thought relevant. It is long standing GLSS policy to use the experiences of GLSS Challenge participants to guide gear and procedure requirement revisions for the organization, and to help others make safe long distance shorthanded passages on the Great Lakes.

### **BACKGROUND**

The second sailing of the LO300SC drew seventeen entrants, a significant increase over the inaugural in 2009 which had three entrants. Seven of the entrants were current GLSS members; the remaining ten were first-timers in a GLSS Solo Challenge. All of the new participants had demonstrated significant prior sailing experience, as well as completing the required 100 mile/24hr Qualifying Solo Sail. The LO300SC constitutes one of many classes within the LO300, and which included approximately 180 boats at the start. Of these, approximately 60-70 retired from the event, many due to the weather event.

### **REPORT SUMMARIES**

***Was the danger anticipated and recognized? Could it have been?***

A weather report and prediction was included in the pre-race Skipper's Meeting the evening prior to the start. The meteorologist noted the instability of the weather systems which would move thru the area on race day, and emphasized the possibility of some severe weather early in the event. By most accounts, the weather briefing was one of the best pre-race reports the participants have had. In spite of this, all were surprised by the power of the squalls. Most were watching as the systems approached. Note that the solo fleet started last, and were the first to be effected by the systems.

After recovering from the passage of the first system, they were able to observe what some described as "devastation", "mayhem", "chaos", and "carnage" as the cells caught up with the crewed boats. Most were

then surprised by the second, more powerful system. While the seas never built to high waves, the surface was described as “boiling white water”.

### ***What precautions were taken?***

Several of the participants chose not to set spinnakers at the start even though the weather conditions were ideal for a downwind spinnaker start. As the storms approached many were able to get spinnakers down, and reduce sail area. Those who were caught with too much sail area paid a price as autopilots were unable to control the boats downwind and allow further sail reductions. Some admitted to remaining “competitive” too long. Those who were able to sail thru the first squall were overwhelmed by the second.

### ***What effect did the weather event have on the boat and crew?***

While seven of the solo boats had to retire from the event, no one reported personal injury, and the boats did not suffer structural damage. Sails were the most common equipment damaged, and the reason most who withdrew did so. The damage affected mainsails, headsails, and spinnakers. Those who lost only the spinnaker indicated they would likely have continued if their mainsails were intact. Only one reported having a spare main, but most had some alternative headsail.

All of the skippers reported a more cautious spinnaker use as the event continued. One boat retired due to a damaged radio. One of the current GLSS members retired, and six of the first-time Challenge participants were forced to withdraw. All were able to bring their boats safely to port. Those who were able to continue reported accommodating to damaged lines, sails, and even a fouled spinnaker halyard that banged and clanked for most of the race.

All also stayed tuned to the weather reports. While the LO300 did not require a periodic call-in, most of the solo fleet did participate using the same schedule used in other GLSS Challenge events. Ironically, once the fleet passed the half-way point near Oswego, NY,

the winds died leaving the remaining participants to deal with a light, and no-wind beat westward for the second half of the event.

Of those who were able to continue, they mentioned their sailing, and previous Challenge experiences as invaluable in allowing them to react instinctively, avoid serious damage and continue. Equipment redundancy and sailing instincts were the most often cited. Some also had back-up autopilots, although none reported having to use them.

### ***Were you knocked down? Any water thru the companionway, and were the hatch boards in?***

Most of the boats were knocked down to some degree, some almost 90°. All tried to release sheets and halyards, some of which got fouled, or clutches failed to completely release. In retrospect most of the respondents indicated they would refit with systems to make sail reduction easier when sailing downwind. Most had hatch boards in and none had sea water intrusion, even when knocked down. Those who did not have the boards in got wet cabins from the rain. Those who had ports open also got wet, but nothing more. Those boats which were not knocked down attribute it to having recognized the approaching storms astern, and reducing sail area in time. They also sensed the need to change from racing mode, to survival mode early on.

Many who reported being knocked down remained so for some time, being driven sideways for what seemed like an eternity. Those who were able to clear fouled lines or sheet stoppers found their boats righted themselves as designed.

### ***Are the current GLSS gear requirements appropriate?***

Most agreed the requirements are adequate, with one emphasizing the need to revisit the issue. The only new gear recommendation / requirement mentioned was a personnel or ship’s EPIRB. One crewed multihull was flipped, but the crew was quickly rescued with the help of other LO300 participants and the Canadian Coast Guard. While all of the boats had trackers provided by the Race Committee, many of

these cell phone based devices periodically would lose coverage.. This underscores the need to let those ashore know they cannot be depended upon. The LO300 shore side RC did a remarkable job of answering the many calls from concerned family and friends.

### ***Glowfast Sail Tape.***

The solo fleet was asked to tape a triangle on their mainsail as a means of identifying them to the crewed fleets. Most of the solo sailors felt there was a potential benefit, by few noted any close encounters with other boats. The tape did glow as designed for most of the night after several hours of sun exposure.

### **501(c)(3) Update**

In case you didn't recognize those numbers they refer to the IRS code section dealing with nonprofit organizations. This change will allow people to make tax free contributions to GLSS. Sorry race entry fees won't be tax deductible. Here is a brief update.

Below is a side-by-side comparison of the current Article VII of the GLSS Articles of Incorporation from 1980 next to the IRS required amendment. When we applied this spring to the IRS for 501(c)(3) status, the IRS required that the GLSS amend its Articles of Incorporation in this way. I have underlined in bold the relevant changes in language. In summary, the changed language would require that the GLSS not be political, and any GLSS money must go to another charity if the GLSS is disbanded.

After the Board approved this amendment this summer, it was filed with the State of Michigan. Although this is what I would call a "technical" amendment, the State of Michigan nevertheless is requiring that the membership (not the Board) approve this amendment to the Articles of Incorporation. This is because the GLSS Articles of Incorporation were adopted in 1980, and since then Michigan has amended its corporation statutes. The Board decided to seek that approval of the members at the AGM in January, 2012.

The proposed change and current version of the Articles of Incorporation follow on the next page:

GLSS Articles of Incorporation -Article  
VII

The original:

Upon dissolution of the corporation, the board shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all of the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purpose of the corporation in such manner, or to such organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the board shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of (by the circuit court of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located) exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations as said court shall determine which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

The IRS Proposed Amendment:

(a) Said corporation is formed to operate exclusively for charitable, religious educational and scientific and other such charitable purposes as will qualify it as an exempt organization under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws, including for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations which qualify as tax-exempt organizations under that Code.

(b) Anything in these Articles of Amendment to the Articles of Incorporation to the contrary notwithstanding, the purpose or purposes for which this corporation is organized are limited to those that will qualify it as an exempt organization under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c) (3), including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as tax-exempt organizations under such code.

This corporation shall not, as a substantial part of its activities, carry on propaganda or otherwise attempt to influence legislation. This corporation shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing of or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

No part of the net earnings, properties or assets of this corporation, on dissolution or otherwise, shall inure to the benefit of any private person or individual or any member or director of this corporation. On liquidation or dissolution, all properties and assets of this corporation remaining after paying or providing for all debts and obligations shall be distributed and paid over to such fund, foundation or corporation organized and operated for charitable purposes as the board of directors shall determine, and as such shall at the time qualify as a tax-exempt organization under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c) (3), or as the same may be amended.

## **The GLSS Quiz**

The following is a brief quiz about GLSS and GLSS races. It may take a little work to figure out the answers. Write your answers down and compare with the answers in the next Solo Challenger.

1. Which Super Mac and Back is Longer; Chicago start or Port Huron start?
2. How many Solo Challenges can one complete in a summer?
3. How many summers will it take to do a GLSS Solo Challenge in each of the Great Lakes and receive the GLSS 5 Lake Award?
4. What is the longest Solo Challenge?
5. What is the shortest solo Challenge?
6. In what year were each of the five GLSS Solo Challenges initiated?
7. In what year were the Super Mac and Super Mac and Back initiated?
8. Which Solo Challenges require a Passport, NEXUS card or similar document?
9. Which Solo Challenges are a class in a crewed race?
10. Which Solo Challenges start in Canada? Which end in Canada?
11. Which Solo Challenges could be completed without entering Canadian waters?

Hint: You should be able to find most answers on the GLSS website: [www.solosailors.org](http://www.solosailors.org)

Comment: The Super Mac and Super Mac & Back are not "Solo Challenges".

## **Poetry Corner: Solo Sailor Job Description**

It has often struck me that the refrain in W. S. Gilbert's poem "The Yarn of the Nancy Bell" could serve as a most excellent job description for a single handed sailor. In an effort to add just a little culture to the Solo Challenger the poem has been included in its entirety. Please note carefully the refrain.

### **The Yarn of the "Nancy Bell"** **By W. S. Gilbert**

Tw'as on the shores that round our coast  
From Deal to Ramsgate span,

That I found alone on a piece of stone  
An elderly naval man.

His hair was weedy, his beard was long,  
And weedy and long was he,  
And I heard this wight on the shore recite,  
In a singular minor key:

"Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,  
And the mate of the Nancy brig,  
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,  
And the crew of the captain's gig."

And he shook his fists and he tore his hair,  
Till I really felt afraid,  
For I couldn't help thinking the man had been drinking,  
And so I simply said:

"O, elderly man, it's little I know  
Of the duties of men of the sea,  
But I'll eat my hand if I understand  
How you can possibly be

"At once a cook, and a captain bold,  
And the mate of the Nancy brig,  
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,  
And the crew of the captain's gig."

Then he gave a hitch to his trousers, which  
Is a trick all seamen larn,  
And having got rid of a thumping quid,  
He spun this painful yarn:

"'Twas in the good ship Nancy Bell  
That we sailed to the Indian sea,  
And there on a reef we come to grief,  
Which has often occurred to me.

"And pretty nigh all o' the crew was drowned  
(There was seventy-seven o' soul),  
And only ten of the Nancy's men  
Said 'Here!' to the muster-roll.

"There was me and the cook and the captain bold,  
And the mate of the Nancy brig  
And the bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,  
And the crew of the captain's gig.

"For a month we'd neither wittles nor drink,  
Till a-hungry we did feel,  
So we drewed a lot, and accordin' shot

The captain for our meal.

"The next lot fell to the Nancy's mate,  
And a delicate dish he made;  
Then our appetite with the midshipmite  
We seven survivors stayed.

"And then we murdered the bo'sun tight,  
And he much resembled pig,  
Then we wittled free, did the cook and me,  
On the crew of the captain's gig.

"Then only the cook and me was left,  
And the delicate question, 'Which  
Of us two goes to the kettle?' arose  
And we argued it out as sich.

"For I loved that cook as a brother, I did,  
And the cook he worshipped me;  
But we'd both be blown if we'd either be stowed  
In the other chap's hold, you see.

"'I'll be eat if you dines off me,' says Tom,  
'Yes, that,' says I, 'you'll be,' --  
'I'm boiled if I die, my friend,' quoth I,  
And 'Exactly so,' quoth he.

"Says he, 'Dear James, to murder me  
Were a foolish thing to do,  
For don't you see that you can't cook me,  
While I can -- and will -- cook you!'

"So he boils the water, and takes the salt  
And the pepper in portions true  
(Which he never forgot) and some chopped shalot,  
And some sage and parsley too.

"'Come here,' says he, with a proper pride,  
Which his smiling features tell,  
' 'Twill soothing be if I let you see,  
How extremely nice you'll smell.'

"And he stirred it round and round and round,  
And he sniffed at the foaming froth;  
When I ups with his heels, and smothers his squeals  
In the scum of the boiling broth.

"And I eat that cook in a week or less,  
And -- as I eating be  
The last of his chops, why, I almost drops,  
For a wessel in sight I see!

"And I never grin, and I never smile,  
And I never larf nor play,  
But I sit and croak, and a single joke  
I have -- which is to say:

"Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,  
And the mate of the Nancy brig,  
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,  
And the crew of the captain's gig!"

**The next Solo Challengers will be posted on the GLSS web and blast mail sent to let you know they have been published. The Solo Challenger published just before the annual meeting along with proxy statements will be sent out by snail mail.**

## **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](http://www.solosailors.org)**