



# The GLSS Solo Challenger

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## *From The Helm*

Greetings solo sailors,

I feel like the sailing season is almost here! The AGM is over and a new Board of Directors (BoD) is in place. But there is a lot to do prior to our boats sailing again. This is certainly the time to thank our out going President, John Hoskins, for an excellent year at the helm of our organization. Along with John, Mark Mahowald and John Ollila have finished their terms on the Board. We will miss their knowledge, committment and dedication. For all of us THANK YOU!



One of the results of my attending this years AGM was the realization that the GLSS has greatly changed since I first earned my membership. We went from the Mackinac Island Challenges to events on all five lakes in a very short time. Our BoD went from a relatively small area meeting monthly in a convient restaurant to meeting by conference calls from one end of the great lakes to another. We also have two Challenges that partner with other organizing groups and require working out a number of complex issues. **And for 2018, we are looking to hold the AGM in TORONTO, Canada.**

As always, the BoD is faced with many issues not the least of which is our finances. We need to look at how to increase our active (dues paying) members. We are now just under 300 Lifetime members but less than 90 are paying dues. We need to reach out to our friends and ask them to support our society. Your suggestions on how we increase our dues paying membership will help. As with all of today's sailing organizations, we are looking at how to attract younger members. Our rigid requirements make that difficult. Membership by Achievement puts a limit on who can meet our standards yet there are things we can do to help. We are always looking at ways to lessen the cost of our required equipment which brings up the issue of electronic flares. And what about the concept of an overall winner for our Challenges? Does that fundamentally change the philosophy of the Solo Society? Or does it only add to what we do since we all try to beat the boat next to us anyway? What was your first thought as you reached the finishline completing that 1st Challenge? "I made it" or was it about where you placed?

These are only some of the issues facing your BoD. I encourage you to contact the board members and express your feeling about these issues or any other ideas you have. WE are YOUR representatives so let us know what you think!

So now let's look at our spring activities, our boats and getting on the lakes.

Ken Verhaeren          GLSS President

The following article was submitted by Al Merrithew. Al is a Past President (1994) and has completed 17 Challenges. Al is a long time member who has made many contributions to our organization.

## Normalizaton of DEVIANCE



By Al Merrithew

I read, with interest, an article by Charlie Precourt, former NASA chief astronaut, space shuttle commander and Air Force test pilot. The subject at hand was the failures of the space shuttles Challenger and Colombia. The subject was somewhat esoteric but well syntaxed, and when I finished, I thought, “Damn, how many times has that happened on the water?”

Please bear with me thru this lead-up, but even this is interesting. Challenger and Colombia disasters were separated by 17 years, but there was nevertheless an identical phenomenon at work in both accidents. This phenomenon came to be known as normalization of deviance, and was a postulate developed by a sociology professor at Boston University.

Normalization of deviance occurs when people become accustomed to a deviant behavior to the point where they no longer see it as deviant; they no longer see what should be clearly visible. The behavior we’re speaking of can be the behavior of individuals, of entire organizations, or it can be the behavior of machines as they operate.

In the case of the shuttle program, the deviations from normal during the flights and pursuit of the mach 25 flight speeds, were numerous. But, when one views a deviant behavior that results in no severe consequences, we tend to think of them as safe and we normalize it. When the deviance finally does have a consequence of note, we have a “predictable surprise.” You know the thought; “What was I thinking.”

In the case of the shuttles, the faulty O-rings and the shedding of lightweight foam insulation had been seen so many times without consequence, that the deviant behavior (deviations from specs) had produced no consequences, promoted contempt and a “Well, that’s the nature of the beast” attitude. Leaky O-rings had produced undesirable venting and small flames, and small, or medium, sized chunks of foam had peppered the shuttle so many times, that when the O rings finally ruptured, and chunks of foam finally penetrated the leading edge of the wing, the catastrophic failures brought the “predictable surprise.” Those minor deviations had never caused a real problem; it was the “nature of the beast” and was normalized. The entire community of NASA had normalized the multitude of deviances, thus becoming deviant themselves.

After I finished the article, the application of this principle became abundantly clear. How many times have we skipped a year examining the top, shrouds, turnbuckles, and goose neck of the mast and boom. What about the black dust all over your engine, or the aquamarine colored streaks on the couplings of the exhaust system? We notice a slight burble in the normally smooth running engine, it disappears, and we go on with life. What about the really dirty fuel filter? Did we clean the tank? 35 years ago, I learned a valuable lesson from Master Mariner, Dick Lappin. Go through everything, every year. Everything.

A few years back I was sailing along in the PH to Mac Solo in a good breeze. I happened to look forward and the view through my fatigued eyes was confusing. I thought my headsail was gone. In fact, it was. The halyard had parted and the sail, though still tacked, was dragging behind the boat. After a bit of gymnastics the sail was again on board. Raising another sail, however was problematic as all the halyards were jammed. I turned and ran for Bay City. Once there, dousing the sail was not easy. Turns out that the line had parted in two places and a three foot length was tangled in the mast. A year later it fell out after picking at it with a plumbers sewer camera.

The point is, I had never had any problems, my examinations of the top of the mast had become too sloppy. Further examination revealed a machine screw that one of the previous owners had put into the masthead and was angled into the roller at the top of the mast. If I had just used a light! My behavior had become deviant because there had been no previous consequences. What's next, parting of the alternator belt (remember the black dust), rupture or leaking coolant hoses? Remember the severely pitted zinc, or the rust on an antenna?

I hope this explanation was not so short as to miss hitting home the point. We all do it. We, as humans have normalized our deviances, as well as those of our machines.

The following is from the GOOD OLD BOAT MAGZINE newsletter.

### **WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE PNW**

Following is a list of 26 sailing aphorisms compiled by the good old folks who make up Sail Lopez, an all- volunteer maintenance crew for the youth summer sailing workshops offered by the Lopez Island Family Resource Center on Lopez Island, WA (<http://www.lifrc.org/sailing>). "We're a dozen dedicated sailors who spend

the fall, winter, and spring repairing the boats the kids destroy in the summer," wrote Gene Helfman. Enjoy! –MR

1. The difference between an experienced sailor and an inexperienced one is that the former has made mistakes the latter can't even imagine.
2. Every solution introduces a new problem.
3. If it ain't broke it will be.
4. The reason a part costs so much is because you need it.
5. The best time to reef was 10 minutes ago.
6. The best boat to race is someone else's.
7. A boat designed to sail efficiently and to motor efficiently does neither.
8. Ferrocement boats make the best artificial reefs.
9. An old wooden boat is the ideal work-release project.
10. Duct tape is never the best solution.
11. When you can't tie a good knot, tie several bad ones.
12. Never cut a rope. Except when someone is tangled in it and going overboard. Even then, reconsider.
13. Many boat ramps and mooring balls were designed by divorce lawyers.
14. The best sailing companion is a dog; they quickly forget being yelled at.
15. Everything's connected, except when a break occurs behind an inaccessible panel.
16. To find something you have to move something.
17. To fix something there is always something else that must be done before the fix can begin; before that, something else must be done before the preparatory fix can begin. And so on.
18. Leaks, squeaks, and creaks seldom fix themselves.
19. When you first think you're almost done, you're not even half done.
20. The sailor who hasn't gone aground has never left the dock.
21. Sailing by the lee is synonymous with prepare to jibe.
22. A boat under sail has the right of way over a boat under power, except always.
23. A skipper under sail who demands the right of way against an oil tanker ignores The Rule of Superior Tonnage, which supersedes all other rights.
24. If you draw 5 feet and the fathometer reads 4.5 feet and the tide is falling, it's time to catch up on minor repairs.
25. A halyard will not clang against an aluminum mast unless acted on by an external force. External forces are always present.
26. The captain always goes down with the ship. Who the hell wrote that? An insurance agent?

# GLSS 2016 Calendar

## **Spring 2017**

### **Muskegon Area Open House & Safety Seminar**

March 11, 2017 Torresen's Marine

### **Chicago Area Open House & Safety Seminar**

March 25, 2017 Crowley's Yacht Yard Yachtapalooza starting at 9 AM  
TBA Larsen's Marine Seminars

### **Detroit Area Open House & Safety Seminar**

March 29, 2017 Great Lakes Yacht Club 7:30 PM

## **June 24, 2017**

### **Chicago to Mackinac and Port Huron to Mackinac Solo Challenges**

The [2016 Mac Solo Challenge Information](#) are available for review.

Both the Port Huron and Chicago starts are on the same day.

Non-member skippers who successfully complete either of the Mackinac Solo Challenges, and have their finish approved by the Board of Directors will be granted membership in the GLSS.

## **July 15, 2017**

### **Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenges**

The Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenge [2016 Lake Ontario 300 information](#)

This race involves completing a circular course of 300 NM around lake Ontario.

Non-member skippers who successfully complete the LO 300 Solo Challenge and have their finish approved by the Board of Directors will be granted membership in the GLSS.

## **August 5, 2017**

### **The Trans-Superior Solo Challenge**

[2015 Trans-Superior Solo Challenge information](#) are available here.

This event takes place every other year (odd years only).

Non-member skippers who successfully complete the Sault Ste. Marie to Duluth Solo Challenge, and have their finish approved by the Board of Directors will be granted membership in the GLSS.

**August 18, 2017**

**The Lake Michigan Singlehanded Society Solo Challenge.**

This fun race is 135 miles and starts and finishes in Racine Wisconsin. It is a good event for Lake Michigan sailors to enter to get your GLSS qualifier sail in, or enjoy a great overnight solo race.

**August 25, 2017**

**Lake Erie Solo Challenge**

The 2016 Lake Erie Solo Challenge information are **available online for review.**

This race extends from the western end of Lake Erie to the eastern end and back about 1/3 of the distance.

Non-member skippers who successfully complete the Lake Erie Solo Challenge, and have their finish approved by the Board of Directors will be granted membership in the GLSS.

**September 8, 2017**

**Lake Michigan Solo Scramble**

The 2016 Lake Michigan Solo Scramble information can be found here. This is a fantastic event, and is steeped in tradition - get your entry in today!

Concurrent starts Friday afternoon from Holland and Racine with the fleets proceeding to the mid-lake weather buoy 45007, and thence to a finish at Michigan City. A BBQ will follow Saturday evening at the Michigan City Yacht Club for racers and guests.

**September 9, 2017**

**Lower Lake Huron Solo**

The 2016 Lower Lake Huron Solo Information can be found here. You may use PayPal to submit the entry fee for the event (does **not** include dinner/beverages at the Sarnia Yacht Club). Make plans to enter and be a part of some great fall sailing!

This is a 42nm race with a Canadian flair, as the start/finish are just off of Sarnia, Ontario. Following the race, there will be a BBQ and Awards Ceremony.

**September 30, 2017**

**St. Clair Solo and Big Al's Race Steak Roast**

2016 St. Clair Solo details can be found here. It is a fun event, and we look forward to seeing you on the starting line!

The following is from Rich Wilson's log as he continues the Globe 2016 - 2017 Rich is currently in 14th place as of



V e n d e e  
2/1/17

# Proper Nutrition & Hydration

by Rich Wilson | Jan 27, 2017 | Ship's Logs

Finally, the promised wind to get across the eastern part of this depression has arrived. The torrential downpours, and regular downpours, have been replaced by bright blue sky and blue seas.



Dragonfly, a long way from land

When the wind did not occur as forecast yesterday evening, I tried to make a fast sail change to the big genoa. Whenever one does something in haste, mistakes are likely to occur, and they did. First, I hoisted the sail around 2 pieces of shock cord that come from the daggerboard to the mast. Instead of lowering the sail after the arduous hoist, I tried to untie the shock cord, but in the surging and swinging of the furled sail, it came out of my hand (the other was holding the halyard wrapped around the winch) and zing it went up and down in a heap. It's not essential, but it was a mistake.

And then, when the sail was finally hoisted and ready to be unrolled, I forgot a safety lashing I put on the furling drum when I was afraid in a blow 3 or 4 days ago that it might come unrolled if something happened to the furling line. I ended up damaging the drum, and twisting the top plate of aluminum, such that I had to saw off with a small hack saw, two protrusions that would prevent it from rotating. It's working ok now, but that's a small mental error, that could have turned into a big mistake if the genoa was no longer available because the furler wasn't working.

Fatigue clearly contributes to these mistakes. I think that I've commented on how I fell asleep while having a Skype with our Expert Murray Lister in New Zealand, and also how I fell momentarily asleep while recording one of our audio reports. A few nights ago, sitting at the chart table, looking at the navigation software, I was eating a slice of bread, and fell asleep for perhaps 30 seconds. I woke up, with a piece of bread in my mouth, partially chewed, un-swallowed, and not yet choked upon. That actually happened two more times, before I made a concerted effort to chew and swallow.

Regarding nutrition and hydration, see an email below, from **Dr. Barnewolt** (Expert), who was concerned that I wasn't replacing glycogen stores rapidly after some of the monumental sail change sequences. It's really interesting and has pushed me to eat and drink rapidly after those big efforts.

*I wanted to make sure you were recharging your glycogen stores adequately after your intense sessions of sail changes and that this is accompanied by an appropriate amount of hydration.*

*As you may recall from your training, and your marathon running days, long periods of intense exercise will actually begin to drop your glycogen storage in your liver. Glycogen is a stored form of carbohydrate and an immediate energy source the body draws on when needed. With prolonged exercise, the glycogen stores can be depleted. Continued depletion will result in intense fatigue – or at least add to the sense of fatigue.*

*My understanding of the research is that restoration is best accomplished within about 30 minutes of prolonged intense exercise with a combination of carbohydrate and protein. One of the very simplest ways to do this at home is to drink a large glass of chocolate milk- easy to make and it has the right protein/carbohydrate mix, and is rapidly absorbed. The recharge process is also dependent on proper hydration, which you know plenty about.*

*I am not sure how quickly you are recharging after intense activity – or if you even have the energy to eat, but thought I would make these points. I know you eat your Fig Newtons, which is great. I also know you have Ensure on board. Here is a breakdown of Ensure vs Fig Newtons:*

**2 Fig Newtons:** 100 calories, 2gm Fat, 20gm carbohydrate, 1gm protein

**Powdered Ensure:** 250 calories, 9gm Fat, 34gm carbohydrate, 9gm protein

**Bottom line:** *After several hours of intense physical exercise, drinking THREE servings of Ensure within two hours of the exercise will help restore depleted glycogen stores. You could get similar caloric and carbohydrate replacement by eating TEN Fig Newtons, but the added protein in the Ensure is important in the whole process and is probably the better option. Of course a combination of the two is also possible, or even using other foods would work. The liquid nature of Ensure makes it simple to implement.*

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

***July 2016 – Ken Verhaeren([verhaerk@aol.com](mailto:verhaerk@aol.com)) editor***

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