



The GLSS Solo Challenger

*The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society
December 2014 – Mark Mahowald (glsswebmaster@gmail.com) editor
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Recording Secretary	John Hoskins
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Mike Spence

This edition of the Solo Challenger has a letter from our GLSS President heading up page 2, details on the AGM in January, a story from this years foggy solo Chicago to Mackinaw solo challenge, some updates on changes to the website, and bios on our new proposed slate of board members.

From the Helm

Ken Verhaeren GLSS President

As I am writing this preparations for the 2015 AGM are well underway. This AGM will be a little different than our last few ones held in Chicago. First the boat show is about two weeks earlier because of the change in the shows organization. Now working jointly with the Boat & RV show, Strictly Sail will still have the same programs but should benefit from those vendors who preferred the larger power boat audience. The GLSS will still have a presence at the show with our booth so start thinking about volunteering some time to spread the word about the GLSS. Because of the change in the date of the show, we had to rebook Magiano's for the new date. This allowed us to move back to the lower level, which should be fun.

I would also like to remind our members that December is the month to renew your membership by paying the dues for 2015. Everyone knows that upon completion of one of our major Challenges the sailor becomes a lifetime member in the GLSS. However, to be an active member requires paying dues for the following year. It not only supports the organization, it also reduces the cost of the entry fees for the next year. Active members are allowed to run for our Board of Directors and vote in those elections. More importantly being an active member strengthens the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society. So how can you help? Get your dues in the mail, or better yet, pay on the website using PayPal (https://www.solosailors.org/pay_dues.php). We have held fast to the current dues level for quite a few years now and have no plans to increase them. Talk to other members you know and ask if they have sent in their dues for 2015. With everything that happens at this time of year paying the GLSS dues just slips our minds so I suggest you go to our website right away and not only pay your dues for 2015 but also sign up for the AGM and Dinner.

As we close the books on 2014 we have much to be proud of. It has been an exceptional year. Our organization continues to grow all over the Great Lakes. We added a longer Challenge (the LO 600) on Lake Ontario and next year will be the 1st Mac & Back. This Challenge will start in both Port Huron and Chicago and circumnavigate Mackinac Island as the sailors continue back to their starting point.

Lastly I want to thank all of you who made my journey on the Board so enjoyable. Past Presidents Nickerson and R. McLaren helped me at every turn. They continue to work for the organization behind the scene. Jon Jacobs who has held about every position we have. What a great source of inspiration Jon is for all of us. And Jeff Neuhalfen who as Vice President made my job so much easier. Finally and most importantly a huge THANK YOU to all of those volunteers on all of our lakes who give us their time so that we can sail. They truly are the backbone of the GLSS.

See you at the AGM
Ken Verhaeren

The 2015 AGM is coming to Chicago January 17th

The venue for the 2015 AGM will be none other than Maggiano's, at 516 N Clark St, Chicago IL 60654. Dinner tickets for the AGM are priced at \$75 per person and there will be a cash bar available as well. Please note, the room seating is limited and tickets need to be purchased by January 10, 2014. In addition to the Annual meeting and election of the board, we are proud to have Dave Rearick speak about his solo trip around the world last year on Bodacious Dream. It will be a great night, and we look forward to seeing everyone there!

GLSS has arranged a group rate at the Kinzie Hotel Hotel for any nights of January 14, through the 17th of \$109 per night for a King and \$119 per night for a room with double queen beds. Parking with in and out privileges is \$46/night.

Please see the website at <http://www.solosailors.org/agm15.php> for all the details and to register and pay for dinner and your annual dues.

We look forward to seeing everyone there!

Newbie Seastory

By Kris Kimmons

Fun In The Wet Dark Fog...

The first night of the 2014 Chicago Solo Mac started off with a round of thunderstorms pushing across the lake which just brushed the fleet. A lightning strike close enough to Jeff Stack on Compensable caused his thumbprint to be transferred to the VHF handheld he was holding! The southwest breeze that heralded in the thunderstorms spread across the still very cold lake (39 degrees), and created an intense thermal inversion. This left the fleet sailing in light fluky winds and fog for the next two days.

That first night, the fog was so thick visibility didn't extend beyond the glare of the forward running lights. The thick cloud (and that's what it was... a cloud that should have been at 5000 feet was shoved down on us at the surface) we were in assumed the 39 degree water temperature. Every surface on the boat was dripping wet, and rivulets of nearly freezing water were cascading off the sails. It was difficult to stay outside for more than just a few minutes as the moisture just immediately chilled to the bone, and my glasses were totally frosted. Not that I could have seen anything anyway. I was trying to keep up with the fleet using my AIS receive on a Standard Horizon GX2150 VHF which has AIS integrated into the radio as the "real" racers several miles out in from were engaging in a spirited bout of tacking as we all were continuing up the rhumb line about 20 nm ENE of Racine. I also had the radio in scan on 16 72 and 8; the latter to listen in on any conversations from the Lakers.

Normally I can receive AIS hits from lakers from 30 nm or more, and Class B emitters out to 15 or better, but not this night. Probably because of the intense inversion which was causing the dense moisture we were in, a

variety of gremlins were affecting various electronics. Many in the fleet were remarking on 72 that AIS was intermittent and several even said they were having problems with GPS receive. AIS contacts would pop up with no data for a few minutes and then just disappear again. I also noticed that the front of the fleet was "painting" more consistently -but still not very well- than boats that were within two miles. As an erstwhile radar operator in the navy, I had seen my share of atmospheric effects on RF (radio frequencies), and was thinking this was all pretty remarkable.

While contending with the wet cold and trying to keep "the bubble" on where boats might be around me, I heard a call on 16 from a southbound freighter making a call to, "boats off Racine". At the time there was a tug and tow that had passed the fleet to the west and was now southwest of us. I assumed that it was him calling out to traffic down his way. As time went on the calls became more insistent, what I SHOULD have done is make a call on 72 to see if anyone else was hearing this guy (turned out to be the Samuel de Champlain)....But I didn't because I figured I was the newbie. Then an AIS target started to show with only the MMSI number about 8 miles ahead moving south at 12 knots, I knew then that it was this ship calling out to the boats in the front who were busy on 72 trying to not run over each other. It wasn't long after that when the lead boats came up on 16 and established comms with the Champlain...And it was an angry voice who lectured us all about keeping a proper watch on VHF 16.

That still wasn't the end of the fun though. As the Champlain maneuvered to avoid the lead boats, he unfortunately turned into the heart of the fleet. During this fast paced period the mate on watch remarked that he was having severe difficulty detecting boats' AIS signals. He too mentioned the short range he was first seeing targets, and that the data such as name and course and speed was missing from the contacts. I also realized that he probably wasn't seeing all of us who were not transmitting AIS! As he closed the back of the fleet, I established comms with him and gave my bearing and range from Dulcinea, which I knew he had already had position fixed. Even then, I am still not sure he didn't confuse me with Nighthawk which was just to the north of me about a mile. It was a spooky thing as the Champlain's fog whistle boomed as she came by.

Fortunately, the rest of the night was much quieter...and wetter and colder. Early Sunday morning though, I heard the Lake Express give her security calls as she cleared Milwaukee harbor, and sure as the world, a quick look at the plot showed that I couldn't plan on sitting astride the ferry lane more precisely if I tried. Remembering my days aboard destroyers trying to keep a surface picture together at 20 plus knots, I started talking to the Express early, and as he got closer fixed my position against AIS targets I knew he was seeing. Glad I did, as he had a heads up, and all went well as I munched on a steaming bowl of oatmeal. I listened as the sound of her whistle and engines approached with a distinct "up doppler" pitch until about a 3nm CPA and then the eerie "down doppler" as she continued across the lake at 30 knots.

Numerous such encounters continued over the next several days. At one point on Sunday, I heard a conversation on channel 8 between two of the Lakers who passed us say, "Gee! Its cold and foggy!! Let's go sailing!" While the other chimed in thinking we were nuts to be out there. Must say, I could really argue with him!!!

So, as a Solo Mac Newbie, here is what I learned about all that:

1. AIS, along with other electronic devices, have changed the way we navigate and keep watch. While for the better, it also means that if you are not transmitting AIS, make sure you are aggressive in contacting ships. The one time I ASSumed I was seen while transiting home in company with Kismet, it turned out that mate on watch aboard the Mesabi Miner didn't see me until he saw my stern light. 305 meters of ship is mighty big at a

half mile with a search light on you...

2. Keep your VHF in scan. At a minimum 16 and 72, with 8 highly recommended.

3. Watch out for your race mates. I *should* have given a heads up on 72 as the Champlain approached.

4. Even though the 2014 Solo Mac was a long slow endurance-fest in the fog and cold....It was a blast!!!!
Can't wait to do it again.

Let's Meet the three 2015 GLSS Board Nominees



Mike Spence,
Board Nominee for 2015.
Served on the board from 2011
to 2013

GLSS Board Title:

Served on the GLSS Board from 2011 through 2013 representing Lake Superior.

Boat Manufacturer, Model & Year:

C & C 44, 1986 with major upgrades and modifications performed in 2006 through 2011 to make it easier to sail short handed.

Boat Name:

Voyager

How did you name your boat:

Voyager 1 was launched by NASA in 1977 to explore the solar system and interstellar space, and is the farthest man-made object from Earth.

How did you learn to sail:

Received an invite to go sailing from a person at work, got hook so bad I went home and bought a 27 foot having only sailed 1 time. After that it was trial and error.

Where is your home port:

Bayfield, Wisconsin located on the south shore of Lake Superior in the heart of the Apostle Islands National Lake Shore area.

How did you get into single handed sailing:

After trying to manage a 9 to 11 persons crewed program for 10 years with our 37 foot and now 44 foot boat, I noticed that people could actually sail with alone. On the non-race weekends, my wife (Kathy)

and I would actually sail throughout the Apostle Islands and the south shore of Lake Superior just fine, and with a lot less organization. Solo sailing seemed like a natural, and with a little encouragement from Eric Thomas from Duluth, I made some equipment upgrades to Voyager, and decided to try single handed sailing.

Which challenge did you do as your first and what year:

My first solo challenge was the 2007 GLSS Trans Superior Solo Challenge.

How many GLSS Single Handed Challenges Have you completed and in which lakes:

Trans Superior Solo Challenges

Trans Superior Solo Challenge	2007
Trans Superior Solo Challenge	2009
Trans Superior Solo Challenge	2011
Trans Superior Solo Challenge	2013

2011 Port Huron to Mackinac Solo Challenge

2011 Port Huron to Chicago Super Mac and Back

2012 Superior 600 GLSS Solo Challenge

What other GLSS awards have you received and in what year:

N/A

What GLSS jobs have you undertaken (race committee, etc.):

GLSS Board member from Lake Superior – 2012 thru 2014

GLSS Secretary in 2012

As a Board Member what are your primary areas of interest:

Promotion of short-handed sailing on Lake Superior (both single and double handed, racing and cruising), showing how it can be done safely and what additional equipment and procedures will make it easier and more enjoyable.

Expanding the scope of GLSS to appropriately represent all five of the Great Lakes.

Any other comments of information about your sailing experience you wish to pass on:

In June 2008 I started my first Port Huron Super Mac and Back thinking I knew it all, and within a few short hours I learned almost everything that could go wrong with a boat's autopilot and electronics. Although I wisely decided to retire from that event, I learned a lot about myself, my sailing abilities, my boat, and how to really prepare. Three years later, I returned for the 2011 Super Mac and Back and successfully completed the challenge in less than ten days. After successfully completing four Solo Trans Superiors, a Super Mac and Back, and the GLSS Superior 600, I have a better understanding, respect, and appreciation for the awesomeness of the Great Lakes and the opportunity to sail on it's waters. Life, and sailing, are about the journey, not the destination.



Lease Schock,
Board Nominee for 2015.

Boat Manufacturer, Model & Year: 1978 Tarten Ten

Boat Name: Avatar

How did you name your boat?

My son Alex chose the name from a popular animated series called "The Avatar". The story line is about an action hero that uses the elements of wind/water/fire and earth to fight evil.

How did you learn to sail?

My brother bought a 26' Columbia in the early 80's,. When he was at work one day (and without any prior instruction or experience), I commandeered it. I was immediately hooked, and have been learning to sail ever since.

Where is your home port?

Sandusky Sailing Club, Sandusky Ohio

How did you get into single handed sailing?

After my son was born my wife became a reluctant sailor, so that style of sailing was more by design then chance. During a late night feeding, while simultaneously surfing the net, I stumbled upon the GLSS. What a great concept....single handed sailing with a bunch of other people!

Which challenge did you do as your first and what year?

2004 Port Huron to Mack

How many GLSS Single Handed Challenges Have you completed and in which lakes?

12 challenges total I believe. 8 on Huron, 1 on Superior and Michigan and 2 on Erie. Only God and Blair Arden would know for sure.

What other GLSS awards have you received and in what year?

2004 Presidents Cup

2008 Peter J. Fisher Memorial Trophy

What GLSS jobs have you undertaken (race committee, etc.)?
Hosted a safety seminar at Sandusky Sailing Club
Booth volunteer at Chicago Boat Show

As a Board Member what are your primary areas of interest?
Member recruitment and retention. I've seen so many people do only one challenge and disappear. I have often wondered how we can keep these people coming back.

Any other comments of information about your sailing experience you wish to pass on?
The camaraderie I have encountered while sailing is without a doubt the biggest perk, and the best part of my experiences.



David Courtney

**GLSS Board nominee for
2015**

Boat : Elite 326

Boat Name: Better Still

I bought the boat with that name, it is the surname of the person I bought the boat from.

Learning to sail by trial and mostly error, have been sailing Lake Ontario since 1991, club racing, regattas, seminars, Safety at sea training and one off shore race. Halifax to St Pierre.

Home port:
Lakeshore YC, Toronto.

Single handed sailing started with an annual Fall race " Last Blast" 1994, a 25 mile to the middle of Lake Ontario around a weather mark and back to LSYC. It is still a race I look forward to every year. I also do most of our club distance races which are crewed events but I do them Solo just to stay practiced.

The first GLSS event was the Lake Ontario 300 2012 I did not complete the race but came back in 2013 and completed it taking home the President's Cup and a third place division finish.

To date I have completed two GLSS LO300 and one 600.

I have not been involved as a part of the GLSS Executive but would like to help out as a director for LO working with Brent Hughes and the rest of the LO Solo sailors, there are many Solo Sailors out there and we will be reaching out to all of the clubs around the lake to encourage them to participate in this wonderful life long sport.

I have a passion for People, encouraging them to break down the barriers (untie their dock lines) and have stories that will inspire. Like all of us I am getting older but on the boat I am forever young, forever grateful.

Dave

End of their 3 year terms – Jon Jacobs & Mike Spence

The 2015 AGM marks the end of the three year terms for Jon Jacobs and Mike Spence. It has been my fortune to have been able to work with these gentlemen for the past three years and I'd like to express my appreciation to them for all their great work for the GLSS. Most of what they have done is never seen by any of us in the organization. They worked on so many little things that just make the "whole" work. Mike Spence, who has agreed to run for another three year term, has worked diligently to increase our presence in the Lake Superior region. Along with giving the Board the perspective of the "COLD" water sailors of the Great Lakes, he has worked on developing new events for Lake Superior. Mike brought us the concept of the Superior 600, a circumnavigation of Lake Superior and one of our longer Challenge. The novel idea he added was starting and finishing at four different locations on the lake. The first running of the event was a success and Mike continues to work on increased participation. The Board happily added Mike's name to the current nominees for the 2015 BoD so that he can continue his work for the GLSS. Jon Jacobs has been on the Board for more years than he wants to remember. He has been serving since 2006. The first and most important thing I want to say about Jon is that he is a GOOD man. What a pleasure it is to be around him. He has held many posts in the GLSS and is a past president. Most recently Jon has been our Treasurer, a thankless job that is vital to the GLSS. He works with every event run by the GLSS and as a former Mac director, I can attest to how helpful he is when assisting the Challenge director. When someone (me) screws up their bookkeeping, Jon helps work them through it and get everything set right. Integrity, dedication and character all define Jon. Be sure to look for LOOSE SHOES as you sail Lake Michigan and give Jon a pat on the back when you see him at the AGM in Chicago.

Ken Verhaeren

Website Update

By Mark Mahowald

As we enter the new year, I wanted to let folks know about a few modest changes that have been taking place with the website, some details on our traffic, and our goals for 2015. We have been working to streamline things and make it easier to maintain the website over time and as it passes to new volunteers. We have also been focused on providing visibility for our events and making it easier for the race organizers to run our events.

Two items that every member can do to help us out is to use the web based entry forms and registration forms (for example, for this years AGM), for all GLSS events, and pay using the PayPal links on the website.

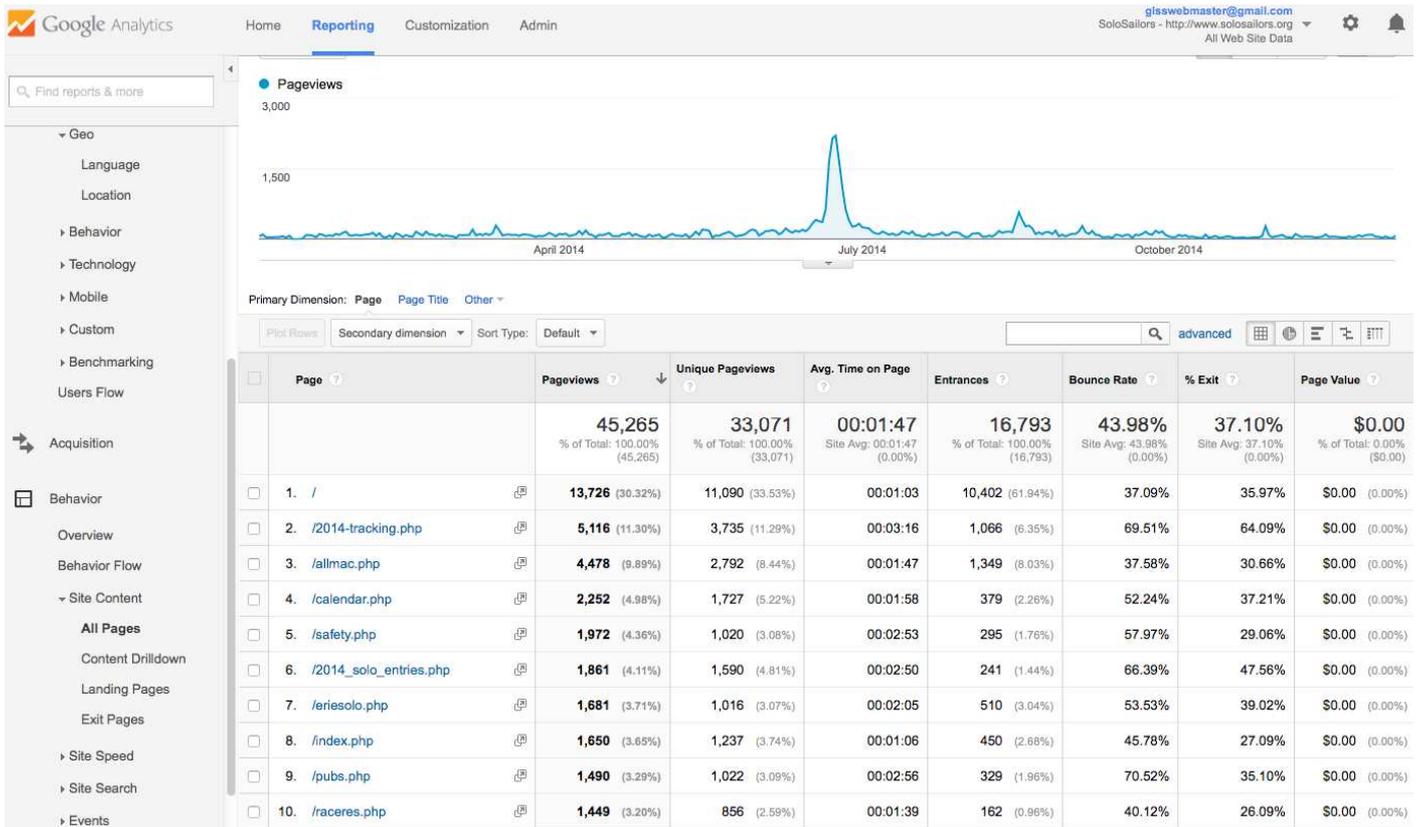
When you enter through the web site forms you reduce the workload on the organizers as your entry information is automatically placed in a race spreadsheet and there is no need for people to recopy a paper entry. In addition, you reduce the chance of a mistake being made in your entry and it save paper and postage !

When you pay with PayPal, you reduce the direct handling of paper checks, which reduces the time spent by volunteers as well as ensures more accurate and timely accounting of payments. The GLSS is run 100% by volunteers and the easier we can make everyone's job, the longer we will be able to grow without paying outside support staff. The board estimates it would cost around \$2,000/yr to handle the book keeping tasks across all our events if we had to farm this work out. Please help us keep the paperwork and book keeping to a minimum, you will not only save the GLSS money, you might save yourself a lot of work when you volunteer to help out!

One other change we have made is to cut over to a new email mailing package called "mail chimp". This system will allow us to add some better formatting and delivery options to the quarterly mailings. It will also remove the need to support the current web based package which was starting to get a little cranky. This SC issue is the first mailing that used the new system. Please let me know if you saw any issues.

The website is a critical point of contact for the GLSS, and I wanted to share some details with you on the website activity:

In the summer months of May through August, the website had 10,256 session visits by 4,061 different users, from many different countries. The activity peaked in June (the 21 through the 24 as we ran the solo mac races) with 800 sessions each day on the 22, and 23 of June. Note: a session is a single visit to the website by a single user, no matter how many pages they viewed in that visit. Our page view counts were higher as you would expect. We had a smaller peak August 17th with the lake Erie solo generating over 300 sessions daily. Clearly the tracking of the races generated a good deal of interest and visits to the website. I was checking on the other boats I was racing with using my iPad while on the course (hey, it was foggy and I could not see anyone) so some of this traffic might have been us watching us ! Having said that, we saw 1,068 new "users" on the website just during the 4 days of the solo mac challenges, and 3,870 "new" users to the site in the 4 month period ending in August, so there are a large number of people visiting our website, tracking our events, leveraging our safety and educational materials and sharing our love of solo sailing.



This graph paints a nice picture of the interest the tracking generated on the website in 2014.

We are always looking for feedback on the website and if you have suggestions for improvements or other comments, please drop me an email at glsswebmaster@gmail.com.

Thanks !