

2001 Mackinac Solo Report

2001 GLSS SOLO CHALLENGE

Race Chairman's Report

The 23rd Port Huron to Mackinac and the 5th Chicago to Mackinac Solo Challenge concluded with the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society proudly welcoming eleven new members into the fold.

June 23rd dawned clear and mild on both lakes. On the Lake Huron side, 17 sailors were expected to cross the start line but only 14 did so. Winds were light on a beat to Goderich. *Artemm J* was first around the Goderich mark. By Sunday morning spinnakers were showing their stuff. Light air was mixed in with some good sailing. Monday afternoon *Tango* said he did a two-pole jibe (whatever that is). I was impressed as I only jibe at night (when I can't be seen) in less than 2 knots of air. It's called a one-pole-one-hour jibe - 'nuff said. Two of our new members are from the Lake Huron side and congratulations are extended to Chuck Drummond and Mario Petit. The Lake Huron President's Cup was awarded to Chuck Drummond - nice sailing, Chuck! First place in their respective divisions were Bob Van Eck, Pat Nugent, Adrian Vanden Hoven and Dan Pavlat.

The 2001 recipient of the Peter Fisher Memorial Trophy is Dan Pavlat who also completed his 10th Challenge this year - well earned, Daniel!

Lake Michigan was our life ring this year and kept us from sinking in red ink. They had a total of 26 entries with 21 crossing the start line. Nine of our new members are from Lake Michigan: Jon Jacobs, Bill Smith, Mike Silverthorne, Dennis Lautner, Bill Erdmann, Greg Jackson, Matt Scharl, Fred Ball and Mike Hanson. Congratulations to you, one and all! Dick Lappin switched lakes this year and said it was one of the most enjoyable Challenges he's done (this being his 19th!). Traverse City was well represented and our thanks to Cal Karr for all his efforts. *Gamera* was first across the finish line followed by *Lucretia* and *Everest Horizontal* -- all new participants - tough crowd! Jon Jacobs on *Loose Shoes* was awarded the Lake Michigan President's Cup - great job, Jon! Dave Rearick, Joe Turns, Alan Veenstra, Paul Schloop, Dick Lappin and Matt Scharl all took first place in their divisions. Mike Murray on *Ruhetag* went aground at Grays Reef early Wednesday morning. *Ruhetag* was towed to Walstrom Marine in Cheboygan with minimal damage to the keel. I talked to Mike a few days later and he came through with minimal damage also, although one of the employees at Walstrom Marine said he'd never seen anyone so tired. Apparently Mike's autopilot quit after the first day and a part on his rudderpost broke requiring some jury rigging. After too many hours of hand steering, Mike just couldn't stay awake any longer. You gave it a heck of a try, Mike, and we're all pulling for you next year.

Our numbers on Lake Huron were the lowest in years. A lot of work, enthusiasm and piss and vinegar are needed to get more new sailors participating. The GLSS Board would like to hear your ideas, comments and suggestions in this regard.

The preparation for and execution of the Solo Challenge has been a "challenge" in itself but the bottom line is: it's been fun! I've enjoyed the many hours on the phone talking to the new participants and getting to know many GLSS members a little better. None of this would have been possible without the help of our members, advertisers (please support them as they've supported us), sponsors, volunteers, friends and spouses. If I forgot to thank anyone at the skipper's

luncheon, please accept my apologies and gratitude. I would also like to thank my wife, Barbara, for her occasional assistance.

Tom Munson
Vice President and Race Chairman

The following report from the Chicago to Mackinac was also submitted.

SLUGFEST ON THE GREAT LAKES.

Written with third beer in hand and tongue planted firmly in cheek by: Dave Rearick

After 60 hours of brutal, competitive downwind sailing between the titans of singlehanded sailing on Lake Michigan, the 5th running of the Chicago to Mackinac Singlehanded race was over. Long time legends Tim "Mr. 50" Kent, Joe "wash" Turns, the Veenstra Brothers; Alan and Mark, Dave "whattime" Rearick, Jim "the paper boy" McLaren, Paul Schloop, Ron Wells, Tony "Flyboy" Driza, Cal "traverse" Karr along with greenhorns looking to knock off the legends; Jon "Pastor" Jacobs, Bill "William" Smith, Mike "Laughing Gull" Silverthorne, Denis Lautner, Bill Erdmann, Greg Jackson, Mike Murray, Dick "nice wig" Lappin and multi-hullers Fred "too tall" Ball, Mike "handsome" Hanson, and Matt "naked turtle" Scharl started this legendary race off Chicago on Saturday June 23rd and finished Monday and Tuesday June 25th and 26th.

With the legendary record set by Dave Rearick in 1998 up for grabs, The Open 50 *Everest Horizontal* sailed by Kent along with the three multi-hullers; *Gamera* sailed by "naked", Too Tall Ball on *Lucretia* and Handsome Hanson on *Solar Express* took off leaving Whattime Rearick on his miniature 33' *Geronimo* to twist in the fate of the weather for nearly two days before it became virtually impossible to unseat his record of just less than 42 hours.

Everest took off a bit low of the fleet and was gone over the horizon just after the start. While still in radio range, a conversation between whattime and Mr. 50 revealed that *Everest* was nearing the Michigan shore and was digging clams off Saugatuck. Tacking off the Beach, *Everest* quickly gave back its lead as it closed in on the fleet. Tacking behind "Wash" on *CatNap*. "Wash" said *Everest* was close enough that he could see Mr. 50 still coiling up the Main Halyard.

While *Everest* and the Multis took off low for the Michigan coast, Rearick took off after the venerable Veenstras, McLaren and Mr. Wash straight up the middle. After 12 hours of critical upwind trim, Whattime finally found his way to the lead group short of Wash. Off to the west, the trio of Flyboy, Karr and Murray took on the Illinois shoreline looking for more advantageous winds to speed their luxurious sailing machines up the lake.

The first evening would bring on the Southwest wind shift everyone was looking for; chutes were set and the run up the lake was on. *Everest*, *Lucretia*, and *Gamera* were on their wheels and gone and the record looked to be in danger. Whattime had held to the center of the lake looking for the mythical SE vein of wind that has often lifted Mac Skippers to unexplicable victories and fame. Others in the fleet on both shores battled in the convergence zone with winds recorded as light and terrible. Mr. Wash seemed to find his own vein of wind and continually reported back to the fleet speeds 2 to 3 knots faster than the rest. As other competitors approached Wash's reported position, they would find nothing of the sort of wind he reported.

As the day and evening wore on, *Everest* was heard to be gybing back and forth up the lake across the nearly dead down wind flow. *Gamera* had taken off for the other side of the lake and was off N. Illinois and approaching Cheese land quickly, What time and "Gramps" Veenstra both did battle with Little Sable Point relaying hair raising tales of death rolls and crash gybes in order to get

off the beach. Laughing Gull lead the rest of the fleet in an early morning shower ritual while "The paper Boy" McLaren microwaved food on the deck with his radio transmissions. We heard from Ron Wells over the radio for the first time in 4 years too!! (Its required you radio in a check-in every 6 hours)

Conditions continued the same to the finish with variations at various legendary places up the lake. The Holes of the Manitous, Grey's Reef Light and passage, "The Bridge" and of course the Finish. Too Tall and Naked had made it to the Reef and down the Straights of Mackinac locked in a virtual match race. Naked, steadfast in his resolve to not allow Too Tall to pass, sailed into the Hole at the Finish. Caught in numerous whirlpools and wake zones, the two waited until Mr. 50 Sailed up the Straights at double digits bringing the new wind into the finish zone. The three would finish within 2 minutes of eachother, Naked first with Too Tall overlapping Mr. 50 by less than 2 seconds.

Next up the lake were Mr. Wash and Whattime, followed by Gramps and Pastor Jon. Whattime coasted up to within a quarter mile of the finish and stopped with no wind at all. Waiting a explicable delete for an evening puff to push him across the line.

Throughout the morning and following day, the rest of the fleet finished. All boiled down, Mr. 50 missed the record by 10 hours preserving Rearick's legendary status as whattimeisitanyways. In Superior division, *Geronimo* sailed by Whattime corrected out in first with *Everest Horizontal* sailed by Mr. 50 in second. In the Michigan Division, *CatNap* sailed by "Wash" bested "Pastor" Jon on *Loose Shoes*, Cal "traverse" Karr on *Belle*, Bill "William" Smith on *Skyhigh* and "Laughing Gull" on *Chute the Breeze*.

In the Ontario Division, Alan "Gramps" Veenstra bested the division in first with his rival brother Mark in second on *Bam.Boo.Zel* followed by Dennis Lautner on *Kyeta* and Radio Free Ron Wells on *Free to Choose*.

The proverbial Paul Schloop on *Blue Max* bested the Erie Division. "Flyboy" on *Whoa Nellie* followed by Bill Erdmann on *Harbour Haze* closed out the division. Huron Division found *Ginger Kay* sailed by the CrossRacer Dick "nice wig" Lappin at the top of the heap followed by the leader of "our gang" Sir Jim McLaren on *Bedouin* and Greg Jackson on *Compass Rose*. Unfortunately, Michael Murray on *Ruhetag* after surviving an Apollo 13esq episode of jury-rigging was unable to complete the course.

In the Green Bay Division, the multi-hulls finished with Matt "Naked" Scharl onboard *Gamera* setting a first for a solo, multi-hull passage from Chicago to Mackinac and a Multi hull record, followed by *Lucretia* sailed by "Too Tall" Fred Ball and *Solar Express* sailed by "Handsome" Hanson.

The Pub Crawl results combined both fleets from Chicago and Pt. Huron. While a tactical decision by Dave Evans pulled the Pt. Huron division into Horn's, the Chicago fleet lead by Laughing Gull caught a lift at the Pink Pony and were able to do an end around and ended up at the Horns for the final dash to the finish. As participants stepped aside, the last of the fleet worked their way thru Horn's to the Irish Bar next door where last seen were Flyboy Driza, navigator Whattime Rearick and the legendary Phantom of Singlehanded Sailing, Rob "frozen in the North" Robins. Whattime gave in and retired. Frozen and Flyboy were last seen locked in a leaning tower configuration and headed to the docks. Flyboy was unloaded onboard *Whoa Nellie* with the explanation, "*there you go Joanie, he's all yours*" by Frozen who was once again crowned Pub Crawler of the year as he headed back down the empty, lonely streets of Mackinac.