



The GLSS Solo Challenger

*The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society
May 2015 – Ken Verhaeren (verhaerk@aol.com) editor*

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Editor's note.

There is a reason why we call today the PRESENT!

Fair sailing my friends. Remember send comments, articles, ideas or anything of value that you want in the SOLO CHALLENGER to Ken at verhaerk@AOL.com

From The Helm

Jeff Neuhalfen GLSS President

Temperatures in the 80s, flowers and trees busting out leaves and blossoms everywhere, boats hitting the water, local sailboat races getting the season started. It's a great time of year to be a sailor on the Great Lakes!

With spring now firmly in control of the calendar, we begin to prepare for summer and the GLSS Challenges. I am happy to report we have a full slate of events this season. Entries are already being filed on every lake! It's time to get those winter projects completed and get to the start line. Your Race Committees have worked tirelessly all spring preparing documents, start committees, and celebration details for all of the GLSS Events. It's time for your part, get that entry into the committee and join with your fellow GLSS members as they sail across our Great Lakes. ***Early entry makes it so much easier for the race committees to do their job.*** If you will not have the opportunity to sail in a challenge this season, consider helping out your nearby race committee. Any assistance is always welcomed and appreciated.

The GLSS has benefited from the dedication and generosity of our volunteers from all corners of the region. From the Board of Directors to the Race Committees, to the presenters at our Spring Seminars, the GLSS relies on volunteers to organize and operate the society. With this in mind, I have asked a few of our members to review how we recruit and maintain the leadership of the society. They will compare the GLSS procedures and practices to other volunteer organizations and yacht clubs. Dan Pavlat, Rick McLaren, Paul Nickerson, John Hoskins, and Brent Hughes have agreed to take on this important task. They will report back to the Board findings and recommendations. As you sail across the lakes this summer, join in the conversation with them and your fellow members. Although it only takes a few to keep the GLSS running smoothly along, it's important we can rely on our membership to step forward for the good of the society.

Proud to be a member of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society,

Jeff Neuhalfen
"Christine Marie"

GLSS SAFETY SEMINARS

This past spring the GLSS conducted more than 15 separate Safety Seminars around the Great Lakes. In addition, 9 other presentations were conducted by our members at different venues.

Do you know your FIRST AID?

During the March presentation at Torresen's Marina in Muskegon, MI., Elisabeth Reichling presented an excellent overview of knowledge ALL boaters should be aware of as they venture out onto our Great Lakes. The audience was particularly interested in the sections dealing with when to call for help and **recognizing the signs of stroke**. (More on signs of strokes later.)



Have you ever seen a Life Raft inflated?

At the completion of the March Safety Seminar at Larson's Marina in Waukegon, IL., John Hoskins gave us all a great show. In seconds a small packaged Life Raft came to life. Something we never want to view out on the lake!



Quick guide to check for possible stroke.

It is a good idea to copy and keep in your first aid kit!

On the following pages is an article by Rick McLaren

Although this article is aimed at those sailors doing the Solo Chicago to Mac Challenge, it is very valueable to any first time participant in any of our Solo Challenges.

Rick has served as the Assistant Race Director, Race Director, VP, and President of the GLSS, and has completed 6 Solo Macs. This article is adapted from the briefing he has given for several years to rookies after the main Skippers' Meeting to protect his antique Swan.

Rookie Recommendations

The goal of this article is to offer some hints to the rookies who are about to attempt their first Chicago Mackinac Solo Challenge. There are many articles on the GLSS website about preparing for a solo, so this article is aimed instead at the last 30 days before the start.

By now the rookie should have installed and tested an autopilot which is reliable, preferably enormous, oversized, underdeck, and certainly at least one size bigger than the recommendation of the autopilot manufacturer. If the yacht is tiller steered, then two (not one) tiller pilots should be ready to go. Autopilot failure is the leading cause of mechanically-caused DNFs. Certainly the yacht's battery capacity is more than adequate, and the charging system can handle the battery bank and more. Electrical failures are high on the list of DNFs too. Naturally, adequate fuel for charging is aboard. Yes, it's true, at least one known DNF resulted from a lack of fuel to charge the batteries. Of course the yacht is equipped with protection for the skipper from both sun and cold. Insect screens? Sure. At least one known DNF resulted from a lack of insect screens, and swarms of those Lake Michigan evil devils that congregate in the millions drove the skipper out of the Challenge.

Now that the yacht is squared away, let's turn to the last 30 days. Sleep on board, solo, to get used to the creaks and groans of the yacht. Better yet, take off on a Friday night in good weather, sail somewhere, turn around, and sail back on Saturday, practicing all the while the skipper's planned routine for sleeping. Many skippers use the 20 minute nap method. Try it now, a month before the Challenge. Is the alarm loud enough? Can you get up to the cockpit quickly to check the horizon, or is your sleeping bag zipper stuck? Can you get back to sleep? Driving our cars we can only look away from the road for a few seconds, so we are conditioned to that timing. At sea, the timing is way different, and it takes getting used to it. Train yourself to keep your eyes closed for 10 minutes, then 15, then 20. It's not easy. Train yourself now before the Challenge.

It's best not to try this the week before the Challenge because the rookie should cross the starting line with at least two nights of good rest. An added bonus of sleeping aboard will be that the rookie will remember just how freaking cold it gets out there when the sun goes down. Down sleeping bag? You bet. Watch cap? Definitely. Wool socks? Of course!

Assuming the rookie is still committed after freezing his ass off sleeping aboard, the next step on the agenda is the Skippers' Meeting the night before the Challenge. It is mandatory, so it's a real good idea to show up. You might learn something. I do, every time. Even ancient veterans like Alan Veenstra and Joe Turns show up. There will be a weather briefing. Don't worry about it, because only John Hoskins knows what The Weather

Lady is talking about. Ask questions. You are surrounded by the very best sailors on The Lake, all kidding aside.

Day #1 dawns and you're leaving the dock in DuSable headed for the starting line. The adrenalin is pumping. Maybe you're taking photos. This is not, I repeat not, the start for a T-10 buoy race. It is not cool to hit anyone, especially any antique Swans. You are about to start a *marathon*, not a sprint around some buoys, and even the T-10 sailors don't want you to scratch their boat. Some of the rock stars like Hoskins and Rick Stage will be throwing up spinnakers. Ignore them. You have three days to go. When they sail into a hole, you'll fly right by. Personally I look for Black Pearl, the 480' Oyster, and line up behind her.

The gun (horn) goes off, the tie dye flag is dropped, and you cross the starting line. Now what? As the marathoners say, 'start slow and back off from there.' This is a grueling marathon, make no mistake. If you spend all of your energy now, you will pay later. Get clear of the field and try to relax. Settle in. Conserve your energy. When the adrenalin subsides, sleep when you feel sleepy. Sleep before you're tired. Eat before you're hungry. Avoid caffeine. Hydrate.

It's 2000 hours on Day #1. You've been sailing all day, and you've made your call in. That's mandatory too, plus if you miss the call-in you ruin everyone's Challenge because you worry everyone like crazy until the Coast Guard helicopter finds you. It'll be dark in about an hour. Get ready for Night #1. Batten down before dark. Charge your batteries. Turn on your running lights. Log your position on paper. It's reassuring. Tour your deck and neaten ship. Coil and stow those halyards. Check the jacklines. Get shipshape. It will be reassuring once it gets dark and you start hearing strange sounds, so it will help you get to sleep. Consider reefing now while you have daylight. If you can't get a nap with your spinnaker up, take it down. Perhaps rig your asymmetric instead for the night. Your A-sail will keep drawing even if the wind goes very light, as it so often does at night on the Lake. Soon it will be freezing cold, so close all of your hatches and ports to retain the day's heat. Eat a hot dinner. Wash up and put on your cold weather fleece and headlamp. Set up your sleeping bag.

Night #1 is the best night for napping because you have the whole Lake in front of you. Night #2 and Night #3 you will be rounding Point Betsie and navigating the Manitou Passage. Get sleep on Night #1 if at all possible. The Lakers stay in their shipping lanes, so stay 3 miles west of the lanes. You will be very close to the rhumb line, you will be able to see their lights, and you will be able to nap without worrying about them.

After you have made it around Point Betsie and through the Manitou's (without hitting the spot that's just three (3) feet deep off Leland), Grey's Reef will be your next hurdle. As the saying goes, 'plan for the worst and hope

for the best.’ Plan that you will get to Grey’s Reef at night and that you will be tacking into a north wind. If there is a Laker anywhere around, stay out of his way. He is definitely limited by his depth.

Take a close look at the chart of Gray’s Reef now and you will discover that the Grey’s Reef Passage runs almost exactly north and south. The White Shoal Light is past the North end, a couple of miles directly north of the north end of the passage. Aim for it. The Grey’s Reef Light is the south west corner of the passage at $85^{\circ} 09'$ west. It’s not a turning mark on the course and you can go west of it without a problem with depth. The east edge of the passage is $85^{\circ} 08'$ west, and it’s lighted by three green buoys. There is good depth west, but not to the east of the passage. Do not go east of the passage. That’s simple, even in the dark. Just tack west the instant that your GPS says $85^{\circ} 08'$. Once you are west of the passage, you can tack back east whenever, but do not go east of $85^{\circ} 08'$. The turning mark is the third green buoy, G-3, aka Fl G 2.5s, at the north end of the Passage at $49^{\circ} 49'$ north. It takes forever to reach it. The distance from the second green buoy to the third one is much longer than the distance from the first to the second buoy going north, both in fact and psychologically. Sail north of $45^{\circ} 49'$ anyway you like as long as you stay west of $85^{\circ} 08'$ and then turn east. Report your rounding of the third green buoy to the Race Committee on the Island.



Now you’re in the Mackinac Straits headed due east for The Bridge. This is the home stretch, and the adrenaline is pumping again. The Bridge is one of the largest man-made structures in the world. It’s huge. It makes its own weather. You might have a good west wind approaching it and be becalmed on the other side. If you are flying your spinnaker, have the sheet in your hand as you approach it—anything could happen.

Cross under The Bridge between the two center towers, not outside them. There’s a very shallow rock shoal called Graham Shoal on the east side of the bridge at the north end. Avoid it by crossing under between the center towers. Notify the Race Committee when you have crossed under The Bridge so that they can be watching for you. They have been up all night watching for you, so make their job easier. Tell them you’re coming.

So where’s the finish line? It’s not where you think. It’s not the finish line for the crewed Mac. It’s not that first light to port on the Island. It’s further east at the second light to port. Year after year we have skippers who stop sailing too soon. Don’t do it. The finish line is a line running north to south that is approximately from the second light to port, the one on the end of the jetty, to the Round Island Buoy (FLG4S6) on the south end. Shine a light on your sail number and keep sailing until you hear “Welcome to Mackinac Island, Skipper” from the Race Committee. That’s all there is to it.

Cheers! RWM Jr

Lake Ontario Happenings 2015

Brent Hughes

The Lake Ontario Members of the GLSS had a very active and productive winter / spring season in early 2015.

We kicked off the season by attending the Toronto International Boat Show then followed it up with a trip to Chicago for the GLSS Annual General Meeting and Strictly Sail Chicago. Right after the Chicago trip, Brent Hughes and Mac MacKenzie (new GLSS member), along with other members of the Lake Ontario Offshore Group, embarked on a 10 Week "Speakers Series" around the Lake, visiting 10 yacht clubs from Youngstown NY to Kingston ON, and speaking to over 400 sailors about the GLSS, the Lake Ontario Short Handed Series (LOSHRS) and the Lake Ontario 300.

The Speaker Series was very well received. Whereas in previous years we have solely talked about safety and preparedness, this year we decided to change things up a little bit for more of an "interests" event. First, Joe Doris would give an overall account of the Lake Ontario Offshore Racing Group and an overview of the night, then Mac MacKenzie described the LOSHRS Series and the 6 events of the year. For those not in the know, the Lake Ontario LOSHRS events have been running since 1975, and consistently have between 100 and 120 yachts sailing in 6 races over 4 weekends of the year (2 weekends are 2 point to point races). This series is an absolute scream, and has been some of the most fun sailing I have ever done in my life. It is a really good group and an excellent mixture of both single and double-handed, flying sails and non flying sails. It is super competitive, but without any trace of ego or arrogance in the entire fleet....this is what makes it so much fun.

The "main" focus of the night was myself, Brent Hughes, discussing the events of the 2014 Sailing Season. More specifically, it was a talk on how I slowly took a 40 year old C&C 35 from a family cruising yacht to a competitive solo racing boat over a number of years, and how it all came together in a big way in 2014. Pearl was fortunate enough to win the LO300 Solo Challenge, the LO300 Sperry Cup (Overall Winner), the LO600 Solo, and the LO600 Overall, all in one week. It was quite the thrill, and went way beyond my expectations.....



The talk itself was not meant to be a "how to sail talk" or a "hey look at me talk". Not at all. There are far greater sailors on the lake to conduct a talk like that.....I just thought it may be good fun to talk

about the journey of taking a 40 year old racer cruiser, from the ground up, and how we made Pearl into what she is today. It was a light hearted personal



"everyman's" type of discussion, simply about how someone who grew up in a sailing family, with a history of one-design and ocean racing, and changes through the years of raising children and growing as a family, to spend later years sailing in a "different" manner than before. There were many aspects of the talk focused around knowing the boat you sail, and how to optimize it for the conditions, for solo sailing, for the GLSS and whatnot. In addition, I also discussed the many negative aspects of the particular boat I sail in comparison to others, the trials and

tribulations I faced, and the challenges ast sea on your own. I tried to cram in as much humour as I could, and keep it a light topic of discussion. Safety at Sea, sleeping, sail changes, and navigation were also discussed.

In the end, I think there was a good balance in the nightly discussions. Mac, Joe, Monica and I always stayed right until the end of each evening in order to answer any and all questions by the racers, and encouraged people to try their hand at solo racing. Our last talk, at Bronte Harbour YC was on April 22.

It was very enjoyable.

To date, we have 10 yachts registered for the 2015 Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenge, including 2 boats from Michigan. Please, if you are interested, get in touch with me at bhughes@ucci.ca. There is free dockage at PCYC for up to a week prior to the race, and there is an on-site TravelLift at PCYC, offering Free launch and haul out services for out of town sailors! How can you beat that. Come on downhill this year and join us on Lake Ontario!

If you cannot make this years' event, please plan on joining us in 2016 for the 2nd Lake Ontario 600 Solo Challenge!!! It will be a Bi-Annual event; come and show the double handed and fully crewed guys and girls how its done.

Happy Sailing

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ARE YOU ENTERED?

SOLO MAC CHALLENGE

June 20, 2015

Enter by May 23, 2015

A late entry fee of \$100.00 in U.S. funds shall be required for an entry received after May 23, 2015. Non-GLSS member applications shall not be accepted after May 30, 2015. Entries for current GLSS members shall be accepted until June 6, 2015, however any entry after May 30, 2015 shall have a late entry fee of \$150.00.

Lake Ontario 300 SOLO CHALLENGE

July 11, 2015

See GLSS Race Documents for information

Trans - Superior SOLO CHALLENGE

August 1, 2015

See GLSS Race Documents for information

Lake Erie SOLO CHALLENGE

August 22, 2015

See GLSS Race Documents for information

It is with great sadness the we report the following!

This article by John Hoskins, GLSS Vice President, expresses the feeling of the many friends of John.

GLSS member John Burhani died on May 5, and I would like to share a couple of my memories of this truly extraordinary person and good friend. John's passion for the water and sailing was second to none. He was a natural sailor in my mind. Whether it was windsurfing, kitesurfing, or sailing he was a master at it and had a natural talent that one doesn't see often. His passions spilled into his personality as he had an exceptional optimism for life. One of the kindest guys you would ever meet and he would love to help out in any way. He loved to talk about sailing. When we were kids, my brother and I idolized him. Tom and I got big into windsurfing at a very young age and Southport Rigging was the mecca for windsurfing in SE Wisconsin. Burhani was the pro there. He was in newspapers and magazines and later sailed for Neil Pryde. We became friends and formed a relationship through our passion for sailing. After my windsurfing days, I ran into John at a WYC Wednesday night beer can race. He was getting big into sailboat racing. In 2005 he heard about my solo racing with the GLSS and he had to enter the challenge. I sponsored him, and he did his first challenge in 2006 and was a pain in my ass all the way up the lake.



John sailed his Pearson Flyer in his first Solo Mac. He had a yellow spinnaker with a big smiley face on it (funny). It was amusing to see early in a Solo Mac, but up by Gray's Reef, not so funny, as I owed him time racing on a Baltic 37. "Damn it there's Burhani" was becoming the common phrase I said out loud. We're running in 20+ knots gybing with kites neck and neck approaching Grays Reef, and John's yellow smiley face chute slowly passes me before the reef. Not funny anymore! I'm watching him end-for-end gybe his Flyer without crashing (impressive), meanwhile I'm doing sock gybes to keep my IOR boat from wiping out (less impressive). Our optimum course was across Grays Reef and well west of the channel. Burhani chimes in on the radio, "Hoskins, you going to cut the reef... right...chicken?" Damn it, of course I have to cut the reef now! As I laid out my strategy Burhani favored further west than I dared. We crossed over Grays

Reef flying downwind barely in control. Rounded G3 and flew down the straits. It was a great race and Burhani beat me handily.

My wife Marian and I raced the LMSS Solo race last year in August. I'm guessing this was one of Burhani's last races he probably ever did. The big 135nm mile triangle started as a light-air beat, then a tight windy reach for miles. It was a lot of helm work and exhausting for my wife and I. Burhani did it solo as a cancer patient! We beat him by only 8 minutes corrected. I was amazed by his perseverance considering his condition, and how fast he was. We met him at the dock and he just passed out after the 20-hour race. He was in treatment at the time.

John was an SOB to race against. We would push each other and rally back and forth. It was awesome. He would always be checking out everything on my boat, he wanted to know "What is Hoskins up to?," as I would do the same. It was so much fun racing against John as we both knew what each other was thinking, and how to push the other.

I gave fellow GLSS member Dave Rearick a hat I bought from a fundraiser for Burhani ("Let it Shine" helped raise over \$40k for his treatment) to take around the world with him. The hat has a picture of his lighthouse on it (he bought the Kenosha Lighthouse to use as an art studio). Dave signed the hat that absorbed a ton of Southern Ocean salt on his trip. Last time I saw John was late last fall when we met for a beer at KYC. I presented the hat to him. With the hat was Dave's great write-up about its travels around the world. He was moved by the gift, and it was a small thing I could do to bring some joy to a truly great friend. We talked about this year's Solo Mac, and he was planning on entering it. In fact, he was rebuilding his rudder within days of passing away, even when his doctor told him he had one week to live. If he was at all able, he would have been in the solo this year and kicked everyone's ass. He was LOVED by the town of Kenosha. He was a fighter and kept sailing until the end. Sail on John!

John Hoskins

John,

Sorry to hear this news. I was honored to have his hat hanging from the hand rail every day, every mile, every night, every storm....every moment around the world. When things got lonely or difficult, it swung, gently back and forth, as if John were with me reminding me how important it is to keep life and all it's bounty in perspective. My thoughts are with you all.

Dave Rearick

