



The  
**SOLO  
CHALLENGER**

*The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society  
Fall 2012 (Revised)*

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**2013 GLSS Events**

- ❖ **January 26** GLSS AGM - Chicago
- ❖ **June 22** Port Huron & Chicago Solo Challenge
- ❖ **July 13** Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenge (corrected)
- ❖ **August 3** Trans Superior Solo Challenge
- ❖ **August 17** Erie Solo Challenge

**See the GLSS website at [www.solosailors.org](http://www.solosailors.org) for more details and entry forms.**

**Articles short handed sailing experiences wanted!**

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**2012 – Another Great Year**  
**By Paul Nickerson, GLSS President**

2012 was another great year for the GLSS and it's time to kick back and celebrate at the 2013 AGM in Chicago. Besides some good stories and a little business we'll hear from Dave Rearick about the Bodacious Dream Class 40 around the world project and John Otterbacher, author of Sailing Grace.

For those who come from out of town it's a great time to also check out the Strictly Sail show at Navy Pier. Don't forget to volunteer to work a few hours at the GLSS booth and talk to interested sailors.

Something hopefully nobody noticed was a recent move of our web hosting server. Bill Tucker has put in a few hours updating the website and we hope to see more change in the coming year. One of the projects Bill and I have been working on is updating all the GLSS Challenge info back to day one in a database and this info is available in the Members Only Section in the form of PDF files with various info sorts. If you see any holes in the data that you can help fill in the information for feel free to contact us. If you have any other ideas for the webpage or can help in any way we would love to hear from you.

Now, most important, get out your calendar and make plans to participate in a 2013 Challenge, and while you're at it, bring a friend.

See you in Chicago!

## **GPS + DSC/VHF & Your Safety**

**By Dick Lappin**

*Editor Note: Dick has done a great job of researching this article. He describes a simple method of quickly getting emergency help. We think of SPOT or EPRIBs for this for emergency help but this method may get quicker response and is uniquely suited to the Great Lakes environment in which we sail. I have had the GPS and DSC radio sitting just 3 feet apparent for several years but have never hooked them up. This is a project for this winter!*

My purpose in writing this is to encourage the use of radio and GPS equipment that most of us already have to provide a superior method of summoning emergency assistance if required.

The USCG developed the "Rescue 21" Program which is now active; reference- Lt. Kennedy (phone: 216-902-6029), communications officer for the 9<sup>th</sup> USCG District in Cleveland. The system gives near real-time information, has coverage in all five Great Lakes and extends well into Canadian waters, if not all the way to their shores. Rescues in Canadian waters are coordinated with the Canadian Coast Guard.

With the Rescue 21 Program, a vessel initiating an emergency "mayday" call on standard VHF radio is automatically located by triangulation. Better still, a vessel with DSC (Digital Selective Calling)/VHF radio, connected to GPS and registered with an MMSI (Maritime Mobile Service Identity) number, is immediately identified and located for potential rescue by the US or Canadian Coast Guards (and other vessels similarly equipped, within radio range) with the push of the single emergency button on the radio. All new VHF radios sold since 1999 have the DSC function.

An MMSI number can be obtained at no cost by going to [www.boatus.com/mmsi](http://www.boatus.com/mmsi). A number obtained in this manner is (theoretically) good for US waters only. For international waters, go to [www.fcc.gov/Forms/Form605/605.html](http://www.fcc.gov/Forms/Form605/605.html) and complete schedule B to get an MMSI number; a FCC

ship station license and operator license are also required for international use.

An MMSI number is assigned to the boat and covers all radios including fixed, handheld and AIS (with transponder). Once an MMSI number is written into a device, it must be taken to an "NMEA master dealer" to be changed.

The following information was obtained from the Boat US webpage concerning US and Canadian boaters:

- 1) US boaters in Canadian waters - Canada is not enforcing US regulations requiring an FCC license. Canada has also de-licensed radios for recreational boaters. Boat US and the Global Maritime Distress Safety System or GMDSS are working to lift the FCC rule for Canada and the Bahamas.
- 2) Canadian boaters in US waters-Boat US cannot grant MMSI numbers to a Canadian vessel. Alternatively, Canadians may complete the form to obtain a free MMSI number through Industry Canada by going to [http://sd.ic.gc.ca/pls/engdoc\\_anon/sd\\_pages.mmsi\\_forms](http://sd.ic.gc.ca/pls/engdoc_anon/sd_pages.mmsi_forms). Note-spaces in preceding web-address are underlines.

Connecting a GPS unit to your DSC/VHF radio can be challenging, but checking the manuals and possibly contacting their technical service reps should help get the job done. The small effort involved could save your life some day.

## **A New Level of Hallucination:**

### **My 2012 Lake Erie Experience**

**By Tom Hughes**

Anyone who has completed a Solo Challenge must have experienced some sort of hallucination no matter how innocuous it had manifested itself. For example, when enjoying one of those relaxing day sails under perfect conditions doesn't the humming of the wind in the rigging start to sound like music after a while?

Level 1 on my personal hallucination scale.

Level 2 (going into the second night out). Talking to myself about the activities I am performing.

Level 3 (going into the third night out). Talking to "others", seeing other people.

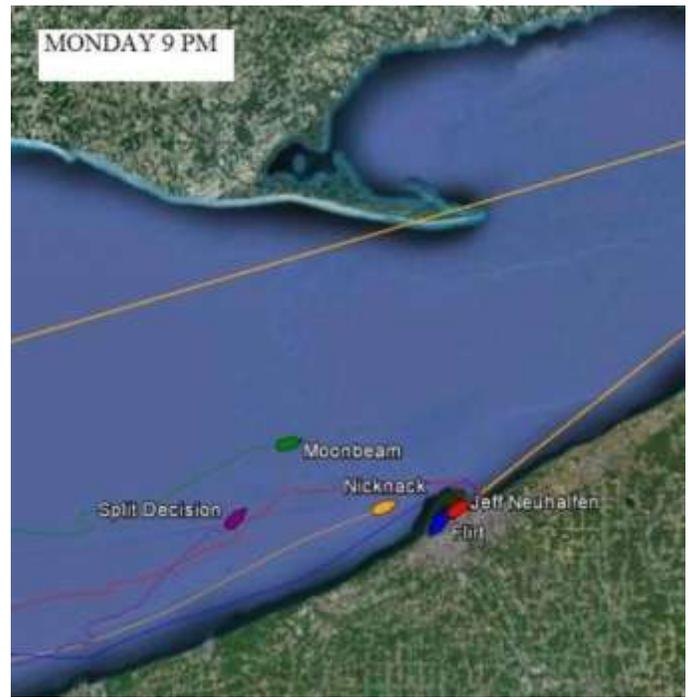
This is as far as I had experienced prior to this year's Erie Solo and at least thought I had "managed" my hallucinations quite well. I was able to turn them off and on most times. I even enjoyed taunting an elf dancing on the fore deck one year, by changing the music on the stereo. He was not fazed and just adapted to the new beat. This all ended when the breeze I was waiting for materialized and my attention became fully focused on the Mac finish line about 10 miles away.

Little did I know that I was going to elevate myself through Level's 4 and 5 before crossing the finish line at Erie Pennsylvania.

Paul Nickerson gave an excellent overall summary of the 2012 LESC in the Summer Edition of the Solo Challenger so I will pick up my story part way through and concentrate on those competing in my division, Michigan.

Late Monday afternoon we were still some 20 miles from passing Erie, while still on the way to the turning mark at Seneca Shoal. It was very apparent that this was going to be a very long, long challenge. During the afternoon three of the five boats in our division retired from the challenge leaving just Al Belovarac on "Moonbeam" and myself on "Split Decision". Both of us on Catalina 34's; it would be a match race? Since I withdrew from the MAC Challenge due to the extreme weather, I was determined to stick this one out to the bitter end. My wife Adrienne had stocked the boat with a plentiful supply of gourmet food and all I had to do was to ensure I got enough sleep. With the forecast for continuing light winds this would seem not to be a problem.

Going in to the evening Al was about 8 miles ahead to the NE of me. I decided to tack north to see if I can get closer to Al and make a race of it.



However shortly after making the tack I see a large weather cloud closing in from behind and tracking my course. Will I out run it or do I tack back? I was frustrating to be faced with this decision after all the benign weather we had so far. I take the safe way out and tack back.



Shortly after darkness set in the wind quickly built to 20 to 25 knots (the cloud?) and I struggled a bit to put a reef in the main. The squall lasted about 45 minutes and I was getting headed towards the lights of Erie. I didn't want to be tacking along the south shore of the Lake all night so I decided to go for one long tack out into the Lake and get some rest. Even though the wind had gone light again I was too tired to shake out the reef during the night. While I did get quite a bit of rest I had to

make a number of tacks to keep reasonably on track. Al had sailed the better tack all night and the Tuesday 8 am call-in showed Al to be 24 miles ahead. It was at this point that I resigned myself to “just getting there” and my goal was now to conserve as much energy as possible.



On Tuesday the wind was light to zero and I drifted off Long Point all day, sometimes going backwards. It was a very hot day and I slept a lot. While I was drifting Al was making steady progress and doubled the distance between us by 6 pm.

Late afternoon a gentle breeze sets in from the west. I managed to set my spinnaker for a short while but the wind was up and down as darkness approached. I went for a tack down wind, to keep some speed on, using genoa and main. In the early hours of my FOURTH night out I am approaching the north shore of the Lake and encountering a fair amount of freighter traffic. This is making it difficult to get much rest. In addition the wind picks up from the north and we are now speeding along at 5 to 6 knots on a beam reach. I pass a couple of red navigation lights a mile or so off my port side (who knows how far off they were at this stage). I then see two rows of bright orange lights off my port bow. They appeared to be about half to one mile off, just above water level. I could only think they were rows of illuminated fishing nets. The latest in fish net technology? I made a course correction to take me away from this potential problem. During the night I was talking to myself about the issues facing me. Only level 2 on my hallucination scale. Not bad considering it was the fourth night.

At 8 am Wednesday I call my wife Adrienne to give her an update. She was amazed that I sounded so alive and well after four nights out. I explained to her that although I hadn't got much sleep last night I had plenty the day before. All I had to do now was to round Seneca Shoal, a couple of hours away and then the “short” 63 NM leg down to Erie.



I rounded Seneca Shoal at 1029 Wednesday, and of course, not long after the wind direction changed from N NE to SW and then W. I have always kept a good log but there were no further entries after the rounding. (A sign that all was not well). Reviewing the plot of my track helped me remember what went on from here on in. I managed to get a couple of long tacks in down the lake but I was very close to shore which made sleeping a nervous proposition. As the afternoon wore on I was getting very tired. While I didn't actually see anyone, I started talking to an imaginary person. I then progressed to talking to a group of people about the imaginary person I had been conversing with. I was desperately in need of some sleep. I changed tack to head out into the lake and get some sleep. Not wanting to get too far off course I tacked back to head to the shore. No rest on this leg. I repeated the procedure a few times and did get a little rest, but every tack was sucking more energy out of me. As the sun was setting for my FIFTH NIGHT I was on a tack heading to the shore line when I spotted two rows of orange lights above the water not too far off shore. My initial thought was more fishing nets? But these lights seemed bigger and brighter. Maybe offshore wind turbines? I did not try to explore what they were and fortunately the wind was making a transition to an off shore breeze and I could now lay the finish line. Once the sun went down I was having difficulty staying awake so I kept myself busy by making a nice meal and tidying up the boat. Al finishes sometime around 11 pm. About Midnight I have a bit of an adrenalin rush when I realize that I am less than 10

NM to the finish and the boat is sailing well. About 1 am I have a bit of an adrenalin rush when I realize that I am less than 10 Nm to the finish and the boat is sailing well. I decide to celebrate by having a shower and a change of clothes in anticipation of meeting a reception committee. I almost had a beer. Am I glad I didn't! It is hard to properly describe what happened next. It was as if I was suddenly thrown into a video game or a movie!



Coming back on deck after my clean up I felt quite refreshed. I was passing quite a number of well-lit homes high up on the banks of the lake. They seemed quite close. I was unfamiliar with this approach to Erie. On previous daylight approaches my final leg had been from the north. A check of my GPS said all was well.

Shortly after I see two "fuzzy white lights" directly ahead. For some reason my binoculars can't bring them in focus. I can only conclude that they are two large power boats anchored for a party. While I am trying to decide if I go between the lights or to one side or the other, the wind suddenly picks up and I am now "hurtling" towards these objects at 6 knots. I let the sheets go on both sails and make a course correction to the deeper water side of the "obstructions". The boat slows right down and I partly furl the head sail and trim the main just enough to stop it flapping to destruction.

We are now cruising along at a "safe" 3 knots. As soon as the sails are under control I look out to port expecting to see the "power boats" close by. Nothing. Astern nothing, To starboard behind the genoa nothing. My feeling of "bewilderment" is quickly replaced with one of surprise/shock. Two rows of yellow lights

suddenly appear on the water directly ahead in the formation of a "fairway". I am faced with the same dilemma. Do I go down "the fairway" or pass on one side. As I look around for clues as to where I am and what is happening I see an Industrial Port with warehouses and cranes on my port side. This isn't right! I dash below and bring up my Richardson chart book, already open at Erie Harbor page. There is nothing like what I can see on the chart. There must be something wrong with my GPS and I must have been lead into the wrong Port!! However my two GPS's are still showing finish line about two miles ahead off my port bow.

Amongst the glare of lights from the City, which are now becoming an added problem, I can see a bright green flashing light, that someone mentioned had been recently installed to make the harbor entrance more visible. The rows of yellow lights are getting closer. They now appear to be rows of floating docks. A big hazard! The green flashing light is telling me to go left. What is left of my common sense is telling me to steer clear, go right, until I figure out where I am. My heart rate is up a few notches as I slowly approach "the docks". I glance over the shore line and the scene has suddenly changed. "The Port" has become an Oil Terminal. There are storage tanks up on the hill and I see what looks like the outline of a barge or barges (with no navigation lights) coming out from the port on a course that will cross my path. This latest hazard has superseded the "floating docks" which are now nowhere to be seen! I slow to 1 to 2 knots.

So far I have not considered the option of stopping to figure things out. While I am waiting for the barge(s) to pass in front of me I look at the shore line and can see what looks like a bridge and cars traveling on an elevated highway. The barge(s) turn in front of me and show me their sterns. Their box stern(s) have two adjacent large rectangular reflective silver sections. Since the barge(s) are going so slow, I ask myself the same question again. Is it one or two barges? Could I go between them? Which side should I take? Then I wonder if it/they are going through the channel into Presque Isle Bay. I decide to follow whatever it is. Dozens of pale pink and yellow lights appear all around me sticking out of the water, like the reflectors you stick at the end of your driveway during the snow season. What level on my hallucination scale is this? My total concentration is on dodging the lights as I follow the silver reflecting objects. My GPS is pointing left but I have lost sight of the flashing green light. The silver

reflectors turn slowly towards the tree line which is silhouetted against the glow of the city lights. Arrows appear on the silver reflectors, the heads pointing horizontally toward each other. The arrows are flashing on and off as if "pointing the way"! I am not seduced and wait to see if whatever it is will find the channel entrance. Suddenly, the barge(s) and all the other lights disappear. It was just like waking up from a nightmare. Apart from the silhouette of the tree line it is total darkness and the boat is barely gliding along. An eerie feeling (no pun intended).

I glide along close to shore and hear the sound of a giggling young lady. I can assure you this was no hallucination. Lucky guy I thought. My GPS is now telling me to go through the trees. I am confused but know this is not a good idea! I am close, but how to get there?? I decide to anchor, get some sleep and then figure things out.



I go to roll up the genoa but the furler is jammed. Halyard wrap after I let the sheets go earlier? My flash light did little to help me see what the problem was at the top of the mast. Not to worry, it was a beautiful evening with a gentle breeze. I turned the boat to sail away from the shore and went below for some cat naps sometime around 4 am. Little did I know I was barely one mile from the finish line.

After about an hour or so I was ready to figure out where I was. I plotted my current position on my chart, double checking the coordinates, and I was confident that I was on the north east side of Presque Isle Harbor.

However, going on deck in the pre-dawn light for a visual from my known position, left me totally confused. All I could see was a wall of trees vanishing off to the east as far as the eye could see while my GPS was telling

me to go through the trees! (I was expecting to see some sign of the "bay" formed by the spit on the north east corner of PI and the main coast line. From where I was on the water, the two tree lines just ran together. The break was just not discernible.). I could not compute what I was seeing. I sailed back and forth while my brain slowly started to wake up. I eventually figured out that from where I was if I sailed to a longitude passing through the finish line and then turned due south I would get there. Duh! As I slowly proceeded with my "plan" I was still hesitant. No break in the trees. GPS still pointing through them.

Eventually a couple of small fishing boats appeared from what appeared to be a small indentation in the tree line about half a mile ahead. Then I saw two sail boats coming from the same direction. A "big jump for joy" as John Ollila (Finnair) and Bill Tucker (GL3) pass me on their way home. The "bay" opens up and I am heading straight for the finish line. One tack gets me over the line at 8 am. I set a record of the longest recorded time to complete the challenge!

Furling my head sail was a non- issue fortunately. Once the sun came up I noticed that there was an override on the furling drum. In the light air one tug at the line broke it free.

Motoring through the cut into the harbor I pass close to Dave Evans (Ratso) who was waving me a very enthusiastic, much appreciated welcome for such an early hour.



Paul Nickerson was still at Erie Yacht Club to welcome me and we enjoyed a breakfast of several very large Scotch's. While I was obviously quite tired after

finishing, I wasn't totally wasted like I have been on some Mac Races. My brain was probably a different story.

Recounting my experience to others I referred to it as starting off as "simple" hallucinations and progressing into a movie that jumped from scene to scene, like being in a dream. Made me wonder if I did fall asleep for a short period. I am just thankful I wasn't making my final approach in 25 knots of wind from the NE.

Exiting the channel to the lake on my way home I did see some features or land marks that probably contributed to precipitating some of the hallucinations. There is warehousing on the south side of the channel to the harbor and there were a couple of cranes that extended well above the tree line. There is also a large lifting gantry just about the height of the tree line...the bridge I saw? The round shape of a blast furnace could have been the storage tanks in my oil terminal?

I place my SPOT tracker beneath my dodger when in use. During the night on the way home I observed a pattern of pulsing lights being reflected on the "windscreen" due to ripples in the plastic. I had never seen this before. Did this contribute to my experience? I also noticed that the two sets of four lights on my Xantrex battery monitor, which look yellow under certain conditions, had a similarity to some of the "mystery lights" I saw.

When I was telling my story to Dave Evans and his wife Maggie, Maggie made the astute observation that I saw two of most of the hazards I encountered. Reflections, eye sight problems?

I'll never really know what were hallucinations or simply reflections of lights on the water and my dodger. It would be interesting to go out about 4 miles with a fully alert brain one night and re-run my final approach with someone else on board to confirm any observations. I'll leave that to the folks at Erie yacht club.

## **An Emergency Plan, Do You Have One?**

**By Paul Nickerson**

*Editor Note: When something like this happens we just want to put it behind us as quickly as possible. Such events can be a learning experience. Hopefully you can learn from Paul's experience.*

As some of you have heard, last summer I was involved in a collision with a power boat while sailing *Nicknack* at night. This not an article to talk about the actual incident but in hindsight I looked back and realized even with all the safety gear we carry, how unprepared I was if things would have been worse. Your odds may be better of winning the Lottery than 2 boats colliding in the middle of the night and there are a lot more things than boats floating through our lakes. In the 2012 Vendee 3 boats were involved in collisions of some sort that forced them to drop out in the first 2 weeks. One lucky part in my story is that a 3<sup>rd</sup> boat was on scene and was able to oversee the 2 boats involved. The first thing after the collision was getting the boats stopped and checking for fatal damage to the boat and injuries.

Stopping a 37' sailboat with full sail at 5 plus knots on a beam reach takes time and distance so immediately the boats were separated beyond yelling distance and this is where the 3<sup>rd</sup> boat became vital. As the collision occurred at my bow I immediately went forward to see if there was any damage, in particular a hole or a busted forestay that would lead to sinking or dismasting. During the whole ordeal, timing is totally lost. How long did it just take to luff the boat into the wind, run to the bow and check for damage away from the cockpit, radio, safety equipment, etc. Fortunately there were no holes and the rig was under no known threat. A quick check below showed no water in the bilge. Back up on deck I conveyed this information to the 3<sup>rd</sup> boat. How much time has now passed?

The sails are still up and luffing and the motor is on. I tell the 3<sup>rd</sup> boat all is fine... I just need to clean up the sails and lines. The Genoa won't roll up and won't drop. So I idle the boat into the wind and drop the main into the lazy jacks. How much time has passed? I don't know but the Coast Guard has made it 5 miles out to the scene from their station. I have not talked to the boat that I collided with between separation and activity on board. I can't recall hearing any radio activity. The Coast Guard is alongside as if they want to board but the Genoa is part way down and won't roll up and they don't want to get too close and I express to them that I'm OK. All of a sudden they take off towards shore chasing the boat that hit me. I later heard that they were severely holed and had at least one injury, probably a broken nose.

After another trip to the bow I realize the roller furler damage is a big kink in the furling tube and a smashed pulpit bent against it. All of my seamen like attempts to furl the sail now resort to putting it on the primary winch and grinding the furling line slowly and getting the sail rolled up and it wasn't easy. At this the 3<sup>rd</sup> boat left and I was alone. Total time was probably 15 -20 minutes.

As I start to motor in I start to wonder what just happened and how much worse things could have been if, if, if. As I sit here several months later I still wonder what should have been done differently and how would it apply to a different situation a solo sailor could be involved in.

We tend to worry about the lake freighters and weather but there are a lot more dangerous things out there. Ever seen a boat hit a buoy? Last summer a sailboat was abandoned during a storm and drifted for several days on Lake Erie from Mentor past Erie, about 70 miles. I've heard dreams of container ships coming on the Great Lakes. Many of us prefer masthead tricolor lights and I have since had very mixed comments. I was under full sail with a masthead tricolor and was in a shipping lane. I had just been passed about 30 minutes earlier by a freighter which of course I was tracking on my AIS. A marine professional tells me he doesn't like masthead tricolors because he doesn't think many recreational power boats know what they are.

Looking at a lot of navigation lights they are actually quite a joke. Old plastic lens fade and cut down transmission. Voltage drops reduce brightness. That 1 mile rating is for perfect conditions when new. This year's Lake Erie Challenge found a lot of the fleet crossing tacks in a light air beat on the first night. I knew there were 7 other boats nearby and keeping track of navigation lights was very difficult when boats would split and then come back together.

We all carry radar reflectors and freighters report seeing them for many miles. But how many recreational boats carry radar and track other boats. How many recreational boats have AIS transmitters for us to track? And how about those floating or slightly submerged objects? In daylight I saw a submerged tree take off a rudder causing the boat to sink. When it comes to that 1 in a million emergency what are the priorities? There's a big bang! Did you hit something? What was it? In 5 seconds decide do I need to save the boat or

save my life. Is water coming in? Do you have time to plug the hole or do you man the life raft and abandon ship gear. Was it the rig? Where was it? In 2 seconds decide is the rig coming down? Get out of the way or try to control it? Can you alter course to save it? Can you realistically expect nearby help? In how long? Can you get out a Mayday or do you hit the DSC emergency button on your VHF? What are the sea conditions? Is it safe to go on deck and inspect things? You've determined the boat is going down in 2 minutes. Do you radio again for help? Activate the EPRB / tracker? Is the life raft ready to deploy? Where's the ditch bag? You're ready to abandon but is there time for one last attempt to save the boat? You're losing the rig but the boat will survive. Where will the mast fall? What will you need to cut loose to get rid of it? How do you prevent other damage? Can you take time to call for help first? Every time you have to go below to get or do something you kill another 30 important seconds. As sailors we don't tend to have a lot of non-sailing gear in the cockpit but where is your spotlight or do you have flares available in the cockpit.

In the time you took to read this article all these decisions would have to be made. We tend to think in terms of freighters and weather being our greatest enemy on the water but those are a lot easier to be prepared for. Hopefully you can always say, "I know this sailor who..... ", and it won't involve you

## **2012 Lower Huron Challenge** **By Tom Hughes**

Watching the weather forecast during the week leading up to race day, it got worse every time I checked. Initially it started at around 15 kts for race day and by race day eve the forecast for the next day was 30 kts from the north with waves up to 11 feet.

There was quite a bit of discussion at the skippers meeting about the weather and how bad it would need to get to cancel/postpone the race. There was tacit agreement that if the race committee boat couldn't make it out to the start line the race would be called off.

The next morning, race day, those of us starting from Bridgeview or Port Huron were a bit fooled as we made our way up river for the start. Hardly a ripple on the water and about 8 kts from the west. I was in a dilemma as whether to put a reef in the main or wait until the

wind picked up later. (which it was forecast to do) In the end I decided to put one in before I got out in the lake...thank God!

Once in the lake the wind gradually increased to about 15 knots (WNW) as we approached the start line. I had already partially furled in the headsail, but during the last couple of minutes before the start I realized the boat was still way overpowered. There was too much pressure on the head sail to furl more so I had to turn down wind to do it. By the time I got sorted out I was close to a mile downwind of the start line. Fortunately I was in a position (and the wind was in a direction) where I could make the line on one tack, but crossed the line 9 minutes late! To my amazement, the boat was going far better than I imagined it could into the wind and waves and pretty soon I was overtaking some boats. In all I only did two tacks to get round R12.(the last buoy of the shipping channel) All the time the wind and waves were increasing.

It was a broad reach to Kettle Point, mostly 25 knts on the beam. I saw some 28's and some less than 20's (not many).The weather forecast was for maximum wave heights of 11 feet. I think we experienced some of those and more. As one of the guys from down river put it "It was the first time he had ever looked up to waves the size of an apartment block" !! Fortunately the waves were mostly a reasonable distance apart, making it a "gentle" rise up and over them. Occasionally there were a couple close together which gave the boat a slap bang and me a soaking. I was doing a steady 7 kts with some 8 to 9 kts. My Autohelm couldn't handle the tendency to round up so I had to hand steer once past R12.

I was wondering how it was going to be jibing around the Kettle Point buoy with a dicey Autohelm, but once I turned down wind to make the turn the A/H managed until I got her around. Then back to hand steering. More of the same on the way back, but the wind was more forward and I couldn't get the boat going the same as before. Some big waves going right over the top of the dodger and filling my open transom with about 3 inches of water until it drained. A lot of water went down below also; under the bottom of the dodger and down the open hatch. I only found this once I was docked.

The first boat to finish was Jim Bennett on Spirit, a C&C 35 at 15:24. The next boat, and overall winner, was Noel Brockman, in his first Lower Huron event, on Quick and Dirty at 15:26. I finished at 16:21 and was second

out of 4 finishers (5 entries) in my division. The last boat to finish did so at 17:06. Overall, out of the 21 entries, 14 finished.

I had several scotches on my boat to get over the race before going to the awards party. Everyone was complaining about the beating they took especially arms and shoulders from hand steering.

Many thanks go to Dave Kember and Kyle Griffin for putting on a great event. Excellent food was provided by Dave and his wife: juicy burgers, big sausages, all the trimmings and two yummy deserts.

The bar closed down at 10 pm, Dave Evans fell asleep immediately after the awards if you can believe, and everyone went and crashed on their boats.

It was quite a race. One that will be talked about for a long time. Since I started competing in this race in 2000 (and haven't missed one) I can only remember three really heavy wind races.

This was the most challenging for sure.

## GLSS 2013 Board Candidate Resumes

*Editor Note: The following article / resumes are based on information provided in response to a questionnaire by the candidates to be elected to the GLSS Board at the January 2013 AGM. All candidates will be elected to a 3 year term except Paul who will be filling out a vacant position for 1 year.*

### **Brent Hughes**

Brent became a member in 2010 when he completed the Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenge. Also for his effort in this race he received the 2010 GLSS Presidents Cup and the 2010 Lake Ontario 300 Perseverance Award (for challenges faced in finishing). Brent sails Pearl, a 1974 C&C 35 (Mark II) out of Frenchman's Bay Yacht Club (FBYC), 19 nm east of Toronto, on the north shore of Lake Ontario.



#### How did you name your boat:

As far as we can tell, Pearl has had the same name since she was commissioned in 1974. Pearl spent her first 20 years in Darien CT, and apparently did at least 1 Newport Bermuda Race and a Caribbean cruise in the past. She came to Lake Ontario in 1992, and was owned by 2 others before we bought her in 2004.

My wife and I owned a succession of racing boats prior to having children with the name "Bohica". As our plans for cruising increased with the arrival of children, Pearl seemed a much "better fit" for our new lives.

Besides, I think Pearl is a great name for the old boat, she is a classic.

#### How did you learn to sail:

I was very fortunate, my parents took up the sport of sailing in 1967 after visiting Bermuda in 1966. When I came along in 1972, sailing was their life, and they owned an Alberg 30. I grew up cruising the Alberg 30, and learned so much from my father.....everything from steering and docking, to navigation, sail trim, boat maintenance, and pride of ownership. He was a very particular old salt, and taught me much.



At 14 years old, my parents allowed me to take the Alberg away for a weekend together with another 14 year old sailor; my first cruise without my parents.....I bought my first keelboat at 16 years old, a Cygnus 20, and never looked back. There is not a day that goes by that I do not thank my lucky stars for a youth of sailing.

Though my father is long gone now, our old Alberg 30 sits in a slip only 5 spots away from Pearl, having been purchased by another old salt in 1997.

How did you get into single handed sailing:

As I moved out of fleet racing (Kirby 25, J24, J27 etc) following the birth of our daughter, our family began to focus more on cruising. We bought Pearl to cruise, and I really wanted to focus on giving our children the life that I was fortunate enough to have growing up. At the same time, I began working with Derek Hatfield on the Sprit of Canada Open 60 campaign. I had known Derek since racing against him in the Lake Ontario 300 double handed in 1994, but I became very much involved in helping his Open 40 and Open 60 campaigns, both personally, and through my business.

Since the rest of my crew from the racing days had all had kids themselves and moved on to other things, I felt I should start sailing solo more often. However, I had always thought I needed to get another "racing" boat again in order to do so, (forgetting how great a racer the C&C35 actually is), but Derek convinced me to simply "run what ya brung". So, in 2010, I made a concerted effort to set Pearl up for single-handed sailing, ordered all new sails, built a custom bowsprit for an asymmetrical kite, and off I went.

Through the spring of 2010, PCYC (who host the solo sailing series LOSHRS and the Lake Ontario 300), and Wally McMinn from the GLSS, were a great help and source of inspiration and information in order to get me going in the right direction.

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

To date, the 2010 Lake Ontario Challenge is the only one I have done.

In 2011, Pearl spent the summer in the 1000 Islands. I borrowed a 25' racing boat for the Lake Ontario 300, but opted to sail it Double-Handed with my best friend and great sailor, Ross Seeley.

In 2012, work pressures and commitments kept me from ALL racing, for the first time in my life.

However, Pearl is already registered for the 2013 LOSHRS Series, and the 2013 Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenge.

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

As the first GLSS member from Lake Ontario, I have been involved in the LOORG (Lake Ontario Offshore Racing Group) for the past 2 years. The LOORG promotes offshore sailing on the Lake, with a focus on the Lake Ontario 300 and the LOSHRS Series, as well as other events. I have been on the committee as the GLSS Liaison, working to keep the GLSS and Lake Ontario sailors together, and promoting single handed distance sailing on the lake.

After 3 seasons, we now have 12 Lake Ontario sailors as members of the GLSS. I want to see that raised to 25 members over the next 3 years.

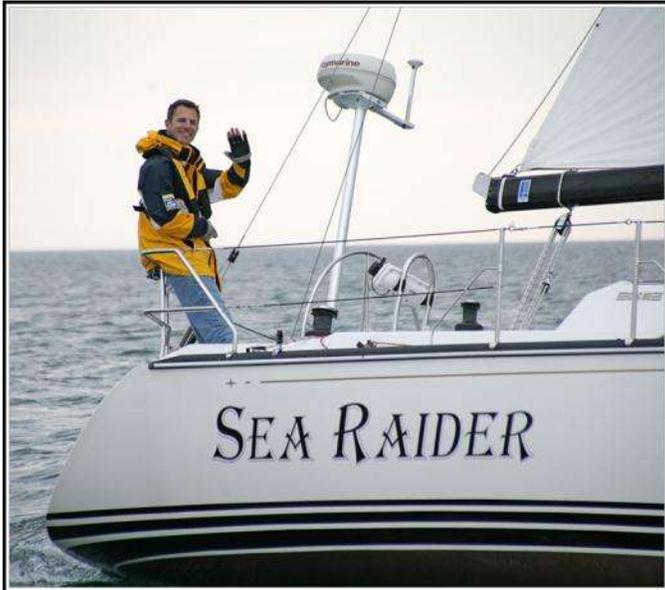
Any other comments of information about your sailing experience you wish to pass on:

Though I have spent a lifetime of cruising and racing, including some offshore racing and a Trans-Atlantic crossing in 2007, it is the 2010 completion of the Lake Ontario 300 and subsequent GLSS membership of which I am most proud.

I am honored to be a member of the GLSS, and look forward to helping in the promotion of our Challenges to sailors on Lake Ontario and beyond. Thank you for the opportunity to serve with you.

## Dirk Kruger

Dirk became a GLSS member in 2007 when he completed his first Chicago Solo Mac. He has completed 6 solo Macs all from Chicago and received 1<sup>st</sup> place in his class 3 times. Dirk sails Sea Raider, a 2005 Novis Marine, C&C 110 out of St. Joseph, Michigan.



How did you name your boat: I was trying to come up with a name that was nautical and a bit aggressive. The aggressive side may have won out!

How did you learn to sail: I started windsurfing when I was 18, back in 1982 when many people on the beach didn't know what it was called. I really enjoyed the challenge of the sport. Living 3 miles from Lake Michigan and being at the southeast end of the lake was ideal for the biggest waves that the lake could generate. Falling in the cool refreshing water was a welcome change from falling off of my skateboard onto concrete in the heat of the summer.

In about 1999 one of my windsurfing friends acquired a trailer sailor. I went out a few times and actually thought that it was a bit lame compared to windsurfing, however I liked that you could experience the lake while enjoying the camaraderie of friends. Being an engineer



I also liked the technical aspects of making a boat sail well. A year later my dad, who had owned a slip (power boat) in a local marina, pointed to a vacant slip that he had made an offer on and said that I should put a sailboat in it. Three weeks later we went to the Michigan City in Water Boat Show and I realized the depreciation schedule of sailboats vs. powerboats. Well, 2 months later on Halloween, I sailed my first boat (1981 Peterson 34) 72 nm across the lake from Wisconsin. That trip was quite a joke and I laugh at it frequently. I went with my trailer sailor friend and a Navy veteran both about my age. I did not have a GPS, but I had studied Microsoft Streets 98 which said that the course was 80+ miles at about 120 degrees. Good enough then, the boat had a compass; it worked to get Columbus across the ocean so it should work to get me home! Besides all of this, I studied a newly purchased Annapolis Book of Seamanship so what could go wrong? The boat broker (Jan Gutherie of Buy-A-Boat.com) squared us away by showing us how the roller furling and main sail reefing worked and even provided us all with good foul weather gear. From my years of

windsurfing experience I was comfortable with what the lake could do and playing in it but I didn't know how strong a sail boat was. Before leaving I asked Jan if we needed to worry about sinking the boat and she said more than likely not. The forecast was 10-20 from the SW. Within 45 minutes of leaving the dock both of my hardy crew were on the rail with seasickness. They were basically out of commission. The wind strengthened until it was 25-35 knots from the south with swells ranging from 6-9 feet. The boat was double reefed with a very small head sail heeled 35 degrees. 10 hours later we tied off at the marina in St. Joseph, Michigan.

I do have to mention that Jan told me that a local solo sailor would be out early in the morning when we left. She had asked him to keep an out for us. The boat was Riptide, the man was none other than our very own John Ayres!

How did you get into single handed sailing: I learned to sail mono hulls by sailing my boat and crewing in the local racing fleet. My growing interest in sailing resulted in my subscribing to most of the sailing magazines available in the US which resulted in my learning about the solo ocean races, the sailors, and the gear/boats. I was, and still am amazed at the abilities of the solo sailors. I went to Newport, RI in 2003 to see Tim Kent and all the other Around Alone boats just to check them out and to be in that atmosphere. Just recently, in the currently running Vendee Globe, the outright solo mono hull distance record was increased to 543 nm on an Open 60. This is just amazing when comparing it to the fully crewed mono hull record of 598 miles being achieved on a Volvo 70.

The Volvo Ocean Race is marketed as "Life at the Extreme". Really? If sailing with 11 guys in a race that has 9 legs on a boat which has only displayed the ability of sailing 10% faster than a solo crewed Open 60 is "Life at the Extreme", what is the Vendee Globe or Global Ocean Race? Better yet, for the next edition of the Volvo, the boats are being downsized to 65 feet and will be a one design boat. What can they say now? How about "Real Sailors Race Solo," that's what!

Ok, I have read this and edited it a few times, being outside of the questions' context have decided to leave it to show my passion for solo sailing.

I learned about GLSS by doing a web search for solo Lake Michigan sailing. After completing one race I have never missed one since. Not only does the race offer the opportunity to push oneself with a sailing adventure, you get to meet a bunch of really wonderful people. The people, camaraderie, and destinations are simply unequalled.

What GLSS jobs have you undertaken: In 2010 I wanted to participate in more solo races and promote it to others. As a result I created the King's Cup which runs between the Solo Mac and Lake Michigan Solo Scramble. The race is run in conjunction with my yacht club, SJRYC, which sponsors a dual handed and fully crewed section: 2010 – 2012 King's Cup Race Chairman. I've represented GLSS at Strictly Sail in Chicago multiple years.

As a Board Member what are your primary areas of interest: I'd like to help the GLSS promote single handed sailing and to contribute to an organization and environment that has greatly enhanced my life. I'd like to provide the confidence and/or education to those contemplating short handed sailing.

Any other comments of information about your sailing experience you wish to pass on: I just can't get enough solo racing in my life with the number of solo races available to me. To fulfill this desire I race most of the year solo and sometimes double handed in the Wednesday night beer can races, local regattas, and the Tri State.

## **Jeff Neuhalfen**

Jeff became a GLSS member in 2010 when he completed the Port Huron to Mackinaw Island Solo Challenge receiving a 2<sup>nd</sup> in class and the Presidents Cup. He has completed 2 solo challenges, both from Port Huron. Jeff sails a 1977 Islander 36, Christine Marie out of the Great Lakes Yacht Club, in St. Clair

Shores, Michigan. Jeff has served as Co-Chair of St. Clair Solo in 2011 and 2012.



How did you name your boat: The name is a combination of the middle names of our mothers.

How did you learn to sail: After developing a curiosity, I enrolled in an ASA Learning To Sail course at a local community college. Halfway through the 4 week course, we bought our first boat. Over time, I learned by trial and error (some more costly than others). Great Lakes Yacht Club has many quality race crews and boats, I was lucky enough to crew on another Islander 36 for several years. The learning experience continues, entering shorthanded and the occasional crewed race. Single handed sailing remains my favorite, the challenge to complete the journey, returning safely to harbor, relying on only yourself and your boat, it is joy, satisfaction, and accomplishment.

How did you get into single handed sailing: During the first couple winters, I would research different sailing topics. Soon I came across "solosailor.org". As I ventured around the site, I became excited about someday becoming a good enough sailor to compete in one of their events. With encouragement and guidance from many GLSS members, I was thrilled to have completed my first Port Huron to Mackinac Challenge in 2010.



As a Board Member what are your primary areas of interest: Maintaining affordable event entry costs, promoting the experience of Great Lakes Single-handed Society local and primary events.

Any other comments of information about your sailing experience you wish to pass on: Growing up in rural Nebraska, sailing was not a common site. The only water of any size was the Missouri River. After the military, we moved to Michigan in 1986. We never thought about boating till 2003. While on a family vacation in Sutton's Bay, Mi. we saw a sailboat for sale on the side of the road. We thought, sailing could be fun and "the air doesn't cost anything". I enrolled in an ASA course at a local community college that fall. Halfway through the course we bought our first boat. A Clipper Marine 25. I was hooked! Over the next couple

years we bought and sold a couple more sailboats till we came across an Islander 36 that had been on the hard for a few years. No the air doesn't cost anything, catching it does. For me sailing isn't a hobby, weekend activity, or even a sport,,, it's an obsession. Often after an all-day sail on Lake St. Clair I would be reporting to Cathy, my wife, "We sailed to here, We passed them, We got some great pictures of this and that". At first she would ask "Who was with you, I thought you were by yourself". My reply "Christine Marie and I, had a great day".

## Paul Nickerson

Paul became a GLSS member in 2007 when he completed the Lake Erie Solo Challenge. He has completed 8 solo challenges, 6 in Lake Erie and one each in Lake Huron and Lake Ontario. Paul sails Nicknack, a 1979 Tartan 37c. Paul is currently serving as the 2012 GLSS President.



How did you name your boat: This is my second boat named Nicknack. The first was a Flying Scot that was being custom built and rigged. We sat down one night thinking of names and came up with Nicknack and a few others. The next day the Scot builder called to confirm some of the custom rigging instructions and then said "You've got a lot of knickknacks on this boat." The name has stuck around now for 30 years.



How did you learn to sail: My father grew up and sailed in Chicago as a teen so I guess it was in my blood. When I moved to Cleveland there were a couple of sailors at work who took me sailing and I was hooked. My wife, Christine, and I got married the weekend of the Cleveland Boat Show and put down a \$10 deposit on a new 17' day sailor. From there it was a few books and a lot of sailing. We then bought a used Flying Scot and actively raced the full circuit for many years.

How did you get into single handed sailing: In 1994 we bought a Tartan 30 and then I joined a group in Cleveland that sailed singlehanded events on Lake Erie. Around this time my work office moved to downtown Cleveland just minutes from Edgewater Yacht Club so there were many nights after work to go sailing, often singlehanded, and enjoy a sunset. The racers always seemed in a hurry to get back in and have a drink.

Which challenge did you do as your first and what year: In 2007 Wally McMinn and Tom Munson were organizing the first GLSS Lake Erie Challenge and in the process stopped by to visit fellow GLSS member Jim Otton and myself. I was hooked and have since done ever LESC. Looking for more adventure, I did the Lake Ontario 300 in 2010. In 2011 and 2012 I decided it was time to head north and sail the Huron Mac. Ultimately I would like to sail all 5 Great Lakes.

What other GLSS awards have you received and in what year: I received the Commodore Perry Award for the

2007 Lake Erie Challenge. That was a very slow challenge and when I went to charge my batteries Monday morning my water pump on the engine went up in smoke. Conserving power I hand steered and saved the batteries as much as possible. I learned a valuable lesson when during the Tuesday 1400 radio check Tom Munson asked if I would be in for dinner. I was only 10 miles from the finish drifting at 3 knots along the coast so I said sure I'll be there by 1800. The winds immediately died and I was lucky to ever see one knot of speed while looking at the finish line. My amp hour meter said I had under 50 amp hours left in a battery bank of four 100 amp hour batteries but even the electronics didn't want to work the voltage was so low. I finally crossed the finish line just before midnight. I have since converted to LED lights and fear predicting a finish time.

What GLSS jobs have you undertaken : I think the real reason I got the Commodore Perry Award was so I would take over as the Lake Erie Race Chair which I have done the last 6 years. I have to say that with two great cooperating clubs and members at the start and finish its relatively easy job.

As a Board Member what are your primary areas of interest: First is to see continued growth for the GLSS. We need to get sailing into the blood of more young people. We all know how much time and work it took to complete our first solo challenge. We also need to get more Members involved in keeping the GLSS active. Make it your goal this year to get to the starting line of a challenge. You can't buy a GLSS membership. Never hesitate to talk to a Board Member about your thoughts or ideas for the GLSS.

## **GLSS Web Update**

### **Bill Tucker, GLSS Corresponding Secretary**

A few weeks ago we were informed that Torreson Marine would no longer be able to host our web site. We appreciate the fact that Torreson has hosted our web site for a number of years free of charge. In the last few weeks we have moved our web site to a new provider. The move went smoothly and at this point we know of

no bugs but if you find one please let us know so it can be fixed.

We have continued to modify the our web site to make it more user friendly and update the content. A few recent changes include:

- Adding quick links to the front page. These will provide quick access to the most current items of interest.
- We have added tables to the Members Only section that list GLSS race statistics in a number of ways. The data base on which these table are based was put together by Paul Nickerson. We know there are some gaps in the data. If you documents that will help us fill in the gaps or see errors please let us know.

Nest year we plan to undertake a major upgrade to our web site which will add a new look and make it easier to keep up to date. More information on this to follow.

If you see things that need updating or would have other suggestions please send me and e-mail: [btucker@alum.calberkeley.org](mailto:btucker@alum.calberkeley.org) .

**Be sure to visit our web:**

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