



# The GLSS Solo Challenger

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*The Official Newsletter of the Great  
Lakes Singlehanded Society March  
2018*

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## *From The Helm*

**Greeting Solo Sailors,**

**This is an exciting time for the GLSS!**

**It is my great pleasure to tell you about some new initiatives in the works for 2018.**

**In the past we have tried to implement a social media strategy online with Facebook and YouTube to help promote the organization. This winter, we have tested a new interactive Facebook Group where all members can post text and video to share with other members. We created this to improve communication between members, and to present our unique brand of sailing to the universe of prospective new members. In the coming weeks, GLSS sailors who have a Facebook account will receive an invitation to join the group. The board feels this will be a strong recruitment tool for us, and help us build membership. So go online and post some of your favorite sailing videos and stories. Also, invite all of your sailing friends to participate in this new forum.**

**To kick things off, last week I posted a video from 2016 when I interviewed Joe Vallee on the porch of the Mac Island Yacht Club. We talked about how the**

**GLSS was formed, and challenges and obstacles that were overcome to make us the fantastic organization that we are today. Next month tune in to see my interview with Cal Karr where he told me about his harrowing rescue of Fred Ball during the 2002 Mac Challenge on Lake Michigan.**

**Another exciting idea that will lend us a higher profile is that we will be updating the format of the Solo Challenger from a PDF file to a blog. This will make our articles searchable on the internet, and able to come up in the results of a Google search.**

**Starting this year, we will be also be transitioning to Yachtscoring.com to facilitate the signup process for all of our challenges. This will streamline the signup process, helping tremendously our race organizers provide better governance of our events. It will also give us more visibility in sailing circles to encourage new participants, as well as help translate race history to our new website rolling out later this year.**

**Lastly, I am honored to announce that Mark Gannon has joined our Board of Directors. Mark has been our Mac Race Committee Chairman for the past few years, and has completed 9 Mac Challenges himself. He will be replacing Ken Verhaeren who will be stepping down after concluding his second term as President.**

Enjoy boat prep season. I look forward to seeing many of you on the Island in June.

Cheers!

Rick Stage

GLSS President

# AGM 2018 Toronto

Toronto opened a new arena for our annual meeting. Passport in hand, many of our members and their guest journeyed north to the last lake joining our organization. Two of the most influential people involved in getting our first Challenge on Lake Ontario were in attendance. Wally McMinn and Brent Hughes worked together to complete the chain of lakes and truly make us the GREAT LAKES SINGLE-HANDED SOCIETY! A few years ago GLSS President Rick Stage interviewed Joe Vallee, a CHARTER MEMBER of the GLSS, Rick asked about how they came up with the name. Joe said it just seemed like the right name. And so it was! Now the GLSS has over 300 lifetime members spread across all of the Great Lakes and around the world.

In the Business meeting preceding the dinner a number of significant items were voted on by the members. Rejecting a motion to return to PHRF certificates that can be used for 3 years, the members confirmed that certificates should be for the year of the Challenge entered. Members also voted that if a Board of Directors decision changes a decision voted on by the membership, that change must be brought to a membership vote. The members also voted to **RECOMMEND** that all entrants into one of our Challenges complete a Safety at Sea course. It was also **recommended** by the members that all entrants in one of our Challenges hold a current membership in US Sailing or the Ontario Sailing organizations.

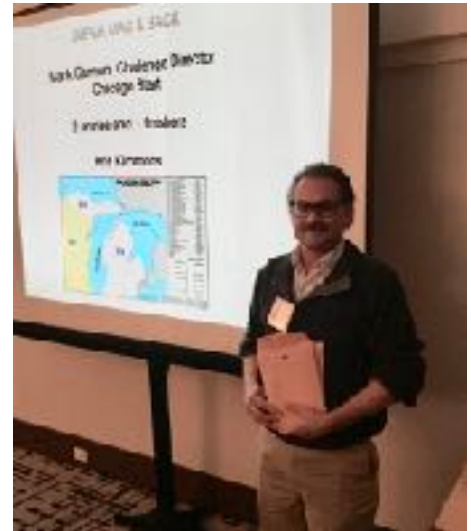
Another decision that affects all members deals with the dues. The board recommended that dues continue at the same \$30 that it has been for years, however, December 31 was set as the due date for the coming year. Any dues received after December 31 would be increased to \$40. A grace period was suggested to cover the days between Dec. 31 and the AGM. The members voted to accept and implement that recommendation.

Dues are now due at the end of the year, December 31st, with a grace period until the close of the AGM in January at which time the dues will be \$40.

Presentation of awards took longer than we hoped but that also shows the number of outstanding members this organization has. We had eighty six entries in our 5 Challenges this year. It was a tough weather year but we still had fifty six finishers including 9 new members. Two members were presents with the FOUNDERS AWARD for outstanding service to the GLSS. Dave Evans accepted the award for himself and Blair Arden. An article follows that tells only part of their story.



Ad then we presented Kris Kimmons with his Super Mac & Back



Medallion. Kris was the only sailor to completed the challenge this year and he is only the 4th to complete it from the Chicago start. Since 2008 the GLSS has had 11 sailors complete the Super Mac & Back. Bill Tucker is the only one to have completed it twice, both starting in Port Huron.

The evening was completed by another on of our members, Diane-Reid. An exceptional solo sailor, Diane talked about her early days sailing the lakes and her upcoming exploits. Diane talked about preparing for the Mini Transat, the Clipper Around the World event and her next challenge arrownd the world doubled handed. Look for future articles about Diane's new challenges.



# GLSS SOLO CHALLENGE ICONS

By Wally McMinn

The successful completion on of a single Great Lakes Singlehanded Society (GLSS) Solo Challenge by most Great Lakes sailors represents a unique and valued personal achievement. It is the only way to qualify for membership in the Society. Two of our members have reset their bar far higher. As of the end of the 2017 season, Blair Arden and Dave Evans have each successfully completed forty Solo Challenges.

*Blair* completed his first Port Huron to Mackinac Island in 1982. He has sailed all of his Challenge attempts aboard his 26' Columbia MK2, "Otis B. Driftwood". Thirty one of his finishes were on Lake Huron, with the remain-

ing nine on Lake Erie. His first solo event was the forty mile St. Clair Solo in 1981, which he did after he was denied



entry into the previous year's Bayview to Mac. crewed event because his boat was declared too small. After completing his first GLSS Port Huron to Mackinac Solo Challenge in 1982 he didn't intend to do more, but like so many others, couldn't resist signing on for more, and more. Blair's advice to aspiring Solo Challengers is to "sail your boat", know it inside/out, and "rest early and often", take your naps.

*Dave* completed his first Challenge on Lake Huron in 1983. Most of his finishes have been aboard “Ratso”, a Cayenne 40’, with two aboard “Valhalla”, a Viking 28’, two or three aboard



an Advance 36’. Twenty nine of his Challenges were on Lake Huron, and eleven on Lake Erie.

“Ratso” spelled backwards stands for OSTAR, (Observer Trans Atlantic Single-handed Race), which he sailed in 1996. He has also completed two

Bermuda One Two’s in 1998 and 1999,



as well as numerous St. Clair Solos. Ironically, Dave was denied entry into the first Challenge he applied for because “he did not have enough sailing experience” at the time.

Dave’s advice to those considering a Solo Challenge is prepare your boat with back-ups for autopilots, GPS’s and everything else. Then, “be sure you really want to do it”, “use common sense”, “then get on the boat and do it”, and finally “finish”.

The only other GLSS Member who has completed at least **thirty** Challenges is *Dick Lappin*. He has completed **thirty four** starting in 1982. He has sailed all

of his events aboard his C&C 27, “Ginger Kay”. His Challenges have included thirty on Lake Huron, three on Lake Superior, and one on Lake Michigan. He had sailed for years out of his club in Caseville, MI. including both Club racing and cruising with his family. He explains his many Challenges as “it just happened”.



Dick’s advise to first timers is to “just have at it”. “Sail your boat to its potential”, and “enjoy the challenge nature presents”. He suggests “getting an experienced mentor, and picking their brain on everything”.

## Mark Gannon replaces Ken Verhaeren on the Board of directors.

Mark Gannon, the current Solo Mac Challenge director, has stepped forward again. As of the March 5th BoD meeting, Mark Gannon has join the board of directors. Mark sails out of Chicago and this is his second term as the head of the



Mackinac Island Challenges. He replaces Ken Verhaeren who stepped down for personal reasons. Ken expressed his appreciation of the other board members particularly their willingness to steppe and be counted.





## GLSS Calendar

# GLSS

### Calendar

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<b>Calendar Comment</b>	<b>The calendar has been updated with upcoming race dates, however the race documents may not yet be available as they are typically finalized approximately one month before the start date. If the current documents are not available, the previous years documents are provided for reference. If just a year and month are listed in the left column then the specific date is not yet available, and the descriptions are for the previous years event.</b>
<b>January 2018</b>	<b>The GLSS Booth at The Chicago Boat, RV &amp; Strictly Sail Show in Chicago and the GLSS joins the LO300 Booth at The Toronto Boat Show</b>  <b>Stop by the GLSS booth</b> , where you'll find members ready to answer any questions you may have about solo sailing, as well as the Society. We hope to see you there!
<b>January 20, 2018</b>	<b><u><a href="#">Annual General Membership Meeting - Toronto</a></u></b>
<b>March 2018</b>	<b>Muskegon Area Open House &amp; Safety Seminar</b>  Torresen's Marine
<b>March 2018</b>	<b>Chicago Area Open House &amp; Safety Seminar</b>  Crowley's Yacht Yard Yachtapalooza starting at 9 AM
<b>April 4, 2018</b>	<b>Detroit Area Open House &amp; Safety Seminar</b>  Please join us for the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society Open House and Safety Seminar at Great Lakes Yacht Club in St Clair Shores, MI.
<b>June 23, 2018</b>	<b>Chicago to Mackinac and Port Huron to Mackinac Solo Challenges</b>  The <b><u><a href="#">2017 Mac Solo Challenge Information</a></u></b> are available for review.  Both the Port Huron and Chicago starts are on the same day.  Non-member skippers who successfully complete either of the Mackinac Solo Challenges, and have their finish approved by the Board of Directors will be granted membership in the GLSS.



<p><b>July 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenges</b></p> <p>The Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenge <a href="#">2017 Lake Ontario 300 information</a></p> <p>This race involves completing a circular course of 300 NM around lake Ontario.</p> <p>Non-member skippers who successfully complete the LO 300 Solo Challenge and have their finish approved by the Board of Directors will be granted membership in the GLSS.</p>
<p><b>August 2018</b></p>	<p><b>The <a href="#">Lake Michigan Singlehanded Society Solo Challenge.</a></b></p> <p>This fun race is 135 miles and starts and finishes in Racine Wisconsin. It is a good event for Lake Michigan sailors to enter to get your GLSS qualifier sail in, or enjoy a great overnight solo race.</p>
<p><b>August 18, 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Lake Erie Solo Challenge</b></p> <p>The <a href="#">2017 Lake Erie Solo Challenge information</a> are available here.</p> <p>This race extends from the western end of Lake Erie to the eastern end and back about 1/3 of the distance.</p> <p>Non-member skippers who successfully complete the Lake Erie Solo Challenge, and have their finish approved by the Board of Directors will be granted membership in the GLSS.</p>
<p><b>August 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Lake Michigan Solo Scramble</b></p> <p>The <a href="#">2017 Lake Michigan Solo Scramble information can be found here.</a> This is a fantastic event, and is steeped in tradition - get your entry in today!</p> <p>Concurrent starts Friday afternoon from Holland and Racine with the fleets proceeding to the mid-lake weather buoy 45007, and thence to a finish at Michigan City. A BBQ will follow Saturday evening at the Michigan City Yacht Club for racers and guests.</p>
<p><b>September 8, 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Lower Lake Huron Solo</b></p> <p>The <a href="#">2017 Lower Lake Huron Solo Information can be found here.</a> You may use PayPal to submit the entry fee for the event (does <b>not</b> include dinner/beverages at the Sarnia Yacht Club). Make plans to enter and be a part of some great fall sailing!</p> <p>This is a 42nm race with a Canadian flair, as the start/finish are just off of Sarnia, Ontario. Following the race, there will be a BBQ and Awards Ceremony.</p>
<p><b>September 29, 2018</b></p>	<p><b>St. Clair Solo and Big Al's Race Steak Roast</b></p> <p><a href="#">2017 St. Clair Solo details can be found here.</a> It is a fun event, and we look forward to seeing you on the starting line!</p>

**Trans-Superior Solo Challenge**

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

## RUDDER DAMAGE: KEY POINTS

There are five main ways that a rudder can break and cause a boat to lose steerage.

**1. Rudder stock failure:** The rudder stock sometimes fails when bending stress in the stock exceeds the strength of the material. With a spade rudder, this usually occurs just below the lower rudder bearing, at the point of maximum bending load.

**2. Rudder blade detaches from the stock:** The blade can detach from the stock as a result of sudden impact, delamination or welds corroding through. Rudders are often built by welding some pieces of stainless steel perpendicular to the rudder stock. Foam is then laminated on either side of these "tang" and fiberglassed over. With time, stagnant water in the rudder can cause the stainless-steel welds between the tangs and the stock to fail.

**3. Bearing/bushing failure:** Bearings can break down over time, especially in steel bearing systems when seals fail and saltwater gets into the bearing pack. Delrin or other plastic-type bushings can also break down over time through material degradation or undue friction. If a bearing/bushing fails, the rudder can seize completely and/or tilt and bind, depending on your course and angle of sail.

**4. Rudder binding:** Rudder blade binding is typically caused by fish nets or lines that become wedged between the rudder blade and the hull.

**5. Hull deformation or cracking:** In some rare cases, rudder failure may be caused by hull deformation or material failure around the rudder bearing mounts. While the least common failure mechanism, it is also the most difficult to repair.

Of course, the best emergency rudder system is the one you never use. So, given these failure mechanisms there are a few things to check to make sure the rudder is in good operational order. These include looking for:

- Pitting, cracks or corrosion of the rudder shaft at joints and especially where it enters and exits the hull
- Moisture in the rudder blade material: use a contact moisture meter or drill a small hole in the rudder blade and check for water
- Cracks or crazing on the surface of the rudder blade, which could suggest hidden flexing of the rudder post
- Any damage in the bearings or gudgeons, including the pintles at the foot of a non-load-bearing skeg
- Cracks or deformation of the hull around the rudder, including cracks in the bottom paint or gelcoat, since these could be a sign of more severe problems
- Movement or deflection of the blade, shaft or bearings when the rudder is pushed in any or all directions



This rudder sustained serious damage in the course of a hard grounding off Fiji

