



# The GLSS Solo Challenger

*The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society  
Dec. 2018 – Ken Verhaeren([verhaerk@aol.com](mailto:verhaerk@aol.com)) editor*

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## *From The Helm*

Greetings Solo Sailors,

After 1 year as President of the GLSS, one fact strikes me as the most important to the success of our organization. Undeniably, this organization is powered by volunteers. Since we have been blessed with incredible volunteers now and in the past, I wanted to start 2019 by thanking a few of them.

Let me begin with Dick Lappin and Norm Bauman. They are our sponsors at the Mac Island Yacht Club every year. Without them, we would be unable to hold our big event with so much comfort and convenience. The MIYC is a fantastic venue with an incredible staff that has always gone above and beyond to take care of us. Thank You Dick and Norm!

Jim McLaren, one of the competitors in the inaugural running of the Chicago to Mac Solo Challenge in 1997 organizes our participation in the Chicago boat show every year, an event that helps tremendously with our recruiting. He also organizes the Lake Michigan Solo Scramble. Thanks Jim!

Another big thanks to his brother Rick McLaren who acts as our in house legal council. Rick is always available as a sounding board on all legal issues, which saves the club a lot of money.

Ken Verharen tirelessly puts this newsletter out year after year. He selflessly stepped in as President in 2017 when we needed someone in a pinch, and organizes our safety presentations around Lake Michigan. This is another great recruiting tool for the club. Thank You Ken.

Thanks go out to Paul Nickerson who organizes our Lake Erie races, and maintains the logs which track our members and how many races they have done. He is the de facto historian of the club, and does a great job.

These are just some the volunteers that I have encountered in the past year. I could go on and on. If you did one of our events this past year, there is no doubt that you have encountered many more, from race committee and starters, to people who man the desk at boat shows. They are the glue that hold our society together, and we would fall apart with out them.

One last person I wanted to recognize is Dan Pavlat. He has acted as our “man on the ground” in Detroit. He is our sponsor at the Bayview Yacht Club, and has helped me tremendously by working with the BYC and Athenaeum hotel to host us in Detroit for the **2019 AGM on Ground Hog’s Day, February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019**. Join us there for a business meeting and presentation by John Lubimir. John will be discussing his Atlantic crossing and racing in England.

Cheers,  
Rick Stage  
GLSS President

**Did you attend the 2018 AGM in Toronto?  
If not, you missed a GREAT time. Don’t miss  
the 2018 Detroit AGM!**

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) is scheduled for Saturday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Bayview Yacht Club. Cocktails start at 1700. Out-of-Towners can take advantage of our block of rooms at the Atheneum hotel. This is the same weekend as the Detroit Auto Show, so get your rooms early.

Anyone who has done a race with the GLSS is invited. You need not be a member and significant others are welcome.

We have a great speaker scheduled, John Lubimir, who recently completed an Atlantic crossing and will talk about his sailing in England. It should be a great event so please plan on attending. More details will be on the web site soon ([solosailors.org](http://solosailors.org)).

**Chicago Boat, RV & Strictly Sail Show**



**PROGRESSIVE**

January 9–13, 2019 | McCormick Place - South



**GLSS will have a booth that will need  
volunteers. Contact**

**Jim McLaren [jmclaren@lbppaper.com](mailto:jmclaren@lbppaper.com)**

**Rick McLaren [mclarenr17@gmail.com](mailto:mclarenr17@gmail.com)**

**Ken Verhaeren [verhaerk@gmail.com](mailto:verhaerk@gmail.com)**

**if you can help.**

### **Visitor Show Information**

Wednesday, January 9: 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 10: 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Friday, January 11: 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 12: 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 13: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Location** <http://www.chicagoboatshow.com/L>

**McCormick Place —South 2301 S. Lake Shore Dr. Chicago, IL 60616**

# GLSS 2018 Lake Erie Challenge

Article by Ron Smallbone

\*. Great article highlighting the spirit of the GLSS and its members. KV

Wednesday, August 1st, 2018

Today my long time good friend Walter Grassi is going to accompany me on the drive to the Bayport Yachting Center, located in Midland, Ontario. The plan is to have Walter drive my car back to my home in Mississauga. I will then have a vehicle near by at the end of the trip.

The 2018 Great Lakes Single Handed Sailing ( GLSS) Lake Erie solo race commences on Saturday August 18th and starts just outside the North Cape Yacht Club in Monroe, Michigan and finishes just outside the harbour entrance at Erie, Pennsylvania. This will be my third Lake Erie solo race. I have already sent out an e mail detailing my rough itinerary to my friends and family. I will activate my Spot tracker throughout this trip including the return leg to the Port Credit Yacht Club.

Once at Bayport I ran into Bruce Cottrell (Dreamward), Scott Hogarth (Swell Dancer) and Scott and Karen Mills. They were minutes from casting off towards a major summer cruise that would take them from Midland, up to the French River, North Channel and beyond. Scott Mills was going as far as Chicago, Illinois. I told them of my intentions and said it was unlikely I would be back here at Bayport. I said my good byes and wished them a safe passage. Walter and I then went to the very popular Boat House Restaurant located at the water front in down town Midland. While at lunch there were a number of brief squalls that blew through the area with some light rain. After lunch we returned to the boat for coffee and then finally Walter was on his way back home.

I carefully packed the boat and did some light cleaning. I feel somewhat sad and melancholy knowing that I may never return to this area for quite some time. I had the same feeling when I left Port Credit a year and half ago. I was recently dumped by my longtime girlfriend who cited too much sailing, ultimately leading to the demise of our relationship. As kids my Mom and Dad used to rent a cottage near here at Port McNichol and I had fond memories sailing this area with my Dad and brothers. Sadly Mom and Dad are all gone along with my youngest Brother Eddie. It's now time to return and bring the boat back to my home port of Port Credit. I certainly won't miss that drive, especially that bottle neck at Highway 401 to the northbound Highway 400 connection.

Thursday August 2nd, 2018

At 607am I departed Bayport and headed out of the main channel on Midland Bay. Today it's an overcast cool morning but the forecast predicts it to be hot and muggy later. At 654am I was abeam of a large cruise ship 'Pearl Mist' near Beausoleil point. She was headed to the Midland Rotary docks travelling at a speed of 7.7-knots on a course of 150 degrees true. I was surprised to see such a large cruise ship in this area so early in the morning. I guess she sailed through the night to be at this port of call.

At 835am I was abeam of the green marker M3 off of Giant Tombs Island, and set a new waypoint north of Hope Island, about 7.9 nautical miles away steering a course of 303 true, motor sailing at 5.8 nautical miles per hour. I have a favourable wind out of the west at about ten knots so I'm going to keep going towards Tobermory once I clear Hope Island. I'm in deep water now and should be able to relax once I clear Hope Island. I'm on a port tack and prefer to go below and let the auto helm steer the boat. Unfortunately I could

use a lee cloth in the main salon. I've rigged up those folding marine seats that I flatten across the Dometic cooler as a bridge and brace my legs against the galley sink for a comfortable ride. I can easily look out the main salon windows to counter the boats motion that brings on sea sickness. On long distance races I've even fallen asleep in this position. I swing the GPS chart plotter out of the weather and sun light so I can monitor my progress and watch out for any ships on the AIS. I set a waypoint just south west of Double Top Island light House, 14 nautical miles north west of Hope Island. At 1130am I set new waypoint off of Cabot shoal on the north east tip of the Bruce Peninsula, approximately 40 nautical miles to the north west. Time for lunch! Lunch was a can of salmon, banana and a fruit cup. There's isolated squalls all around me. Around 2pm I was headed so I dropped the head sail and double reefed the main. I'm only doing about 4.5 knots. It's going to be a long day. The wind died completely around 5pm. I continued to motor with the full main. At 905pm I am now abeam of Cave Point along the north rocky picturesque shore of the Bruce Peninsula, then past over hanging Point. Earlier I passed the protected anchorage of Wingfield basin and contemplated stopping there for the night. It looked pretty crowded so I gave it a pass. It's amazing just how deep it is off these points. I am in a depth of 562 feet not that far from shore. The sun just set giving me a spectacular light show reflecting off the clouds. I've taken down the main sail and readied the boat for docking while there was still sun light. I plan on pulling into the Tobermory Municipal marina fuel dock for the night if there is space. At 11pm I was safely tied up at the Tobermory Municipal marina fuel dock. There was just room for me to tie up. There was a large American power boat taking up most of the dock space. I sent a 'I'm ok' signal from my Spot tracker with my latitude and longitude to my contacts. I checked and topped off the engine oil before heading off to sleep.

Friday August 3rd, 2018

Just after 7am the large power boat Sea Ray cast off. They're headed to Lake Erie. It's a clear calm sunny morning. The marina does not open until 8am. I took on 23.9 litres of diesel and pumped out the holding tank. The kind clerk did not charge me for dockage and offered a fresh cup of coffee. At 823am I cast off and carefully making my way to the Devils Island channel. I picked up the first mark at 854am. You have to turn here to avoid Greenfield Shoal. If you miss this mark and continued straight you'd run onto the rocks. At 932am I exited the last buoys marking the Devils Island channel and set a new waypoint at the mouth of the harbour at Kincardine. Kincardine is 63 nautical miles away and I'm steering a course of 176 true. The wind and waves are right on the nose so this is going to be another long day. I'm motoring at a speed only 4.5 knots, so it will be approximately 15 hours from now. It's now clouded over, a humid hazy muggy day. At about 2pm the winds clocked around to the south west so I decided to motor sail.

At 410pm environment Canada issued a severe thunderstorm weather warning for southern Ontario including Kincardine. I could see the ominous dark cumulus clouds building to the south east exactly where I was headed. I started to prepare the boat, taking down the sails. It's really muggy now and I'm sweating bullets. The stable flies are also starting to bite. Nobody likes being out here in a lightening thunder storm. I'm now 24.80 nautical miles to the entrance at Kincardine and motoring at a speed of 5.5knots. At this speed I'm just over 4 hours to Kincardine. It turned out I dodged the thunderstorms, passing to the south west of my location, taking all the wind with it. At 930pm I was safely tied up in front of the fuel dock. I was lucky to get the last spot. There's a big party going on here in town, the Old boys and Girls reunion held every ten years, anyone and everyone that had any connection to Kincardine is invited. There's a live band in the parking lot adjacent to the marina and the water front is crowded with people. I tried to get a bite but the kitchens were just closing in most of the restaurants. I just went for a warm shower at the marina and called it an early night.

Saturday August 4th, 2018

Today I plan on heading to Bayfield. After fuelling up I plan on walking into town for breakfast before casting off. I did just that and ate a huge pancake, sausage, bacon breakfast at the Bruce Steakhouse. (750 Queen

Street, Kincardine). At 10am I cast off the mooring lines and headed out the channel, then turned south west towards Bayfield, Ontario. I telephoned my friend long time PCYC member and single hander George Minarik, advising him I would be at Bayfield later tonight. Apparently George and his wife Janet are at Bayfield where they are building a house. Tomorrow they're headed to Bill Frances annual corn roast and barbecue near Thornbury, Ontario. Bill France used to be a single handed racer but sold his C&C 27, Anik many years ago. Bill was one of the original organizers of the first Lake Ontario 300 race back in 1989 and an active single hander. Bill France and the late Bob Simms sponsored my membership at PCYC in 1988. I think Bill might of have been drinking when he signed my membership application at the bar at the old club house on the Credit River! At 1152am, after clearing Clark Point, I set a waypoint near the entrance at the town of Bayfield, steering a course of 174 degrees true. I am now 31 nautical miles away from Bayfield travelling at a speed of 4.7knots. The seas are calm and there is a light wind out of the south. It's a warm hazy overcast day. At 630pm I pulled into the fuel dock at the Village of Bayfield marina and topped up the diesel tank. I noticed the engine was unusually hot. When I went to restart the alarm activated. immediately shut down the engine. I noticed the fan belt had shifted causing excess strain. I loosened the belt and will try the engine again in the morning. If that's not the problem I'll check the impeller and make sure it's pumping water through the engine. I called George Minarik and he invited me for dinner at his cousins place. He picked me up from the marina. It was nice to catch up on the news with George and Janet and our host Catherine Cornish. Janet cooked a beautiful mushroom risotto, fresh beans and smoked pork chops. Once back at the boat I tackled the engine issue, first by loosening the belt. I've had this problem before and had to place vice grips on the track so that it does not accidentally slide causing the belt to over tighten and heat up. As you see later this was not the cause.

Sunday August 5th, 2018

I changed the impeller. I was missing about fifty percent of the blades! At 721am I departed Bayfield and set a waypoint to the mouth of the Sarnia Yacht club basin, about 35 nautical miles away. Unfortunately the wind was right on the nose so the best I could do was 252true and I need to be steering 211. The impeller and area around the impeller is leaking considerably. I tried motor sailing at 3000 rpms and the engine started to over heat around 11am. I immediately shut down the engine. I shut off the engine water intake valve and will continue sailing. At 1120am Sarnia Coast Guard radio issued a squall warning for Lake Huron. At 239pm I thought I would try the engine again, backing off the throttle to 2500 rpm. This seemed to work. The engine is no longer over heating but I'm constantly sopping up the water from behind the leaky impeller at the water pump. That's life aboard an old boat. There's always something that needs maintaining replacing or breaks on an older boat. Long time single hander Tom Hughes and his wife Adrienne have graciously extended an invite to dinner at some point once I arrived at the Sarnia Yacht club. Tom and Adrienne visited me on that lonely wharf in Fairport, Ohio back in August 2016 when I lost my rudder. The United States Coast guard towed me from the middle of the Lake to that location. It meant a lot to me and the friendship and kindred spirits amongst single handed sailors is hard to explain. At 730pm I was greeted by Tom Hughes who directed me to the fuel dock. Once registered Tom gave me a hand to tie up. These are bow in secured with pilings docks and you exit off the bow. We celebrated with drinks and will get together tomorrow for breakfast. I went for a hot shower, then on advice from Don Manns, googled leaky Yanmar 1GM. I found a helpful you tube video regarding a Yanmar water pump seal kit which I'll will have to source out on Tuesday. I'm hoping Bridge View Marine will have these parts in stock. I believe this is my problem.

Monday, August 6th, 2018.

It's a hot and muggy today here at the Sarnia Yacht club. I received an e mail from my good friend and fellow GLSS competitor Noel Brockman from Belle River, Ontario offering to help with my leaking water pump issue. Noel is very competent and mechanically skilled and he's done this job on an older boat with the same engine. I've seen the work Noel has done on two of his boats and I was impressed. You just can't beat how fortunate I am to have such good friends and contacts around the Great Lakes. I'm a day sail away from

Belle River, so once I get the seal kit I'll take up Noel up on his offer to help. I just don't have the proper tools needed to set up the pump on a vice, remove the bearings, drift punch out the shaft and replace the seals. One small nick in a seal or failure to properly seat the seals will screw this job up. At 10am Tom Hughes and I attended the Bridge view marina to see about the availability of the seal kit. Unfortunately this is not a part that is kept in stock and the clerk advised it could take up to a week to get these parts. I contacted Noel Brockman and he advised me he was pretty sure he could source out the parts locally or even have the seal fabricated. Tom and I then went to the very popular and busy Waterfront restaurant, Alternate Grounds Dockside, 97 Seaway Road, in Sarnia for breakfast. We then returned to his beautiful riverside home in Corunna, Ontario. He overlooks the famous astronaut Chris Hadfields summer cottage. Tom and his wife Adrienne graciously showed me their beautiful home and he offered me an eight person certified life raft for a price of a Chinese take out dinner! Hopefully I never will have to use the life raft but it sure is comforting to know that I have one on board. He also gave me a Richardson chart book for Lake Huron. Tom volunteered to help me take my boat to Belle River Municipal marina on Lake St. Clair. This will be a huge help to navigate the busy St Clair river while I tend to the leaking water pump on the way. At about 830pm Tom delivered me back to the Sarnia Yacht club.

Tuesday August 7th, 2018

Today I awoke to a overcast warm muggy day. I met a fellow sailor George Ayers, owner of a Niagara 35, Heritage. George has cruised the Bahamas and gave me a contact at St Clair Marine (owner, Paul Dezel) in La Salle who is a Yanmar dealer.

Today long time single hander Tom Hughes will be joining me at around 930 am for the trip to the Belle River Municipal marina on the south side of Lake St Clair. At 950am we cast off and headed down bound on the St.Clair river. We passed by Toms dock and his wife Adrienne took some pictures as we passed by their dock.

It was a god send having Tom on board while I constantly sopped up the water from the leaky water pump. At 3pm we entered the main freighter channel of Lake St. Clair. Just after 4pm we left the main channel and set a way point for the entrance to the Belle River Municipal marina on a course of 161 true, located about 9 nautical miles away. The depths were approximately 15 to 20 feet for most of this route. At 630Pm we were safely tied up at the Belle River Municipal marina. A short time later Tom and I were picked up by long time single hander Noel Brockman. Noel had arranged for a free dock in a slip of a friend whom he knew would be away at this marina. Noel drove us to his beautiful home on Surf club Road, in Lakeshore, Ontario. The famous boxer, the late Joe Louis, from Detroit used to own a surf shop here many years ago and they had illegal gaming and liquor establishments here back in the late fifties and early sixties. It was quite a gathering place for Detroit blacks who were often discriminated back home. The remnants of the old surf club are long gone but the street name is a testament to its early history. Noel's wife Debbie graciously made home made beans, barbecued sausages and they put me up for the next two nights. Noel and his boys built this house twenty years ago. It's an incredible structure with majestic high vaulted ceilings, a huge stone corner wood burning fireplace, a two car garage, covered porch, back deck, with a second storey sail loft and work shop on an acre lot, overlooking a conservation area. This house was designed by his Son Luke when he was just a young teenager at the age of 17. In addition there's an elegant out building, garden shed

that they used what is now the sail loft as a temporary home while the main house was being built. Noel's wife is a true crafts person who makes her own quilts and Afghan blankets, and has expertly decorated the entire- house throughout. She also knits and crochets as well.

Wednesday August 8th, 2018.

We had a wonderful breakfast of fresh fruit and bagels and fresh coffee. Adrienne and her niece Sarah came by to pick up Tom Hughes. sincere thank you to Tom, Adrienne and Sarah. We said our good byes and Noel Brockman sourced out the lip seal and bearing parts from Canadian Bearings in Windsor. Ironically the parts

are coming from Mississauga, Ontario and will be available at about 830am tomorrow. In the afternoon Noel and I went for a short sail out of the Belle River Municipal marina on his well equipped, custom Olson 30. What a nice sail, and an education on how to properly set up a racing sail boat. Later Noel barbecued burgers back at his home.

Thursday, August 9th, 2018

It's going to be a sunny and warm windy day today with heavy rain later in the afternoon. I joined Noel and Debbie on the front porch for fresh coffee, bagels and assorted fruit. Just after 9am we headed out with a quick stop at the marina, on our way to Canadian Bearings in Windsor, Ontario. Noel and I picked up the bearings and seals and returned to Noel's work shop where he installed the new parts into my old pump. He carefully seated the seals, greased the bearings, seals and O ring. The pump shaft was slightly scored so he buffed that out. Noel and I then returned to the Belle River Municipal marina, and I installed the water pump. A short test revealed no leaks, a success! The old loaner pump was returned to Brad Brown owner of Downhill Run, which was Noel's old C&C 27. I then took Noel out for lunch at the marina. At around 6pm there was a heavy rain fall that blew through the area. It was over in a short time period followed by a rain-bow and light winds. I caught up on my journal, e mails and face book friends news feed.

Friday August 10th, 2018

This morning I awoke to a windy overcast morning. The winds had clocked around to the northeast and there was a bit of surge at the marina especially at the fuel dock. I requested assistance from the marina staff at the fuel dock. This should be a-favourable wind to head towards the Detroit river and my intended destination at the LaSalle Mariners Yacht club. At 830am I topped up the fuel tank, about 10 litres and headed out of the Belle River Municipal marina. I was about two nautical miles out when the engine alarm went off. I immediately shut it down, put up my sails, and then called Noel. Noel instructed me to return to the marina so that he could investigate. I did just that and called Noel once I was back at the same slip. Noel was already on line looking at the Yanmar manual. A short time later, with tools in hand Noel arrived and started the methodical diagnostic process. He found something was blocking the water flow to the engine, possibly a piece or pieces of an old impeller that was severely restricting the water flow that cools the engine. He dislodged the material and opened up the water flow. He put everything back and adjusted my fan belt. We went for a short test drive, driving the engine at 3200rpm. The water discharge was noticeably higher, and more importantly no more over heating. I can't thank Noel enough!! At 1137am I was back on my way towards the main freighter channel. I called Dave and Maggy Evans to let them know that I was coming to their club located in LaSalle, Ontario. At 215pm I was past Belle Island, on the Detroit River, and at 230pm past the Windsor Caesars casino and at 245pm passed under the landmark separating Windsor and Detroit, the Ambassador bridge. At about 430pm I was safely tied up at the south wall of the LaSalle Mariners Yacht club. (LSMYC) . Dave Evans himself was there to greet me and helped me tie up. I met many of the LSMYC friendly members on the shaded covered patio in front of Dave Evans slip where his 40 foot Cayenne 'Ratso' is berthed. I neatened up the boat, packed up, and Dave drove me to his home where I met his wife Maggy. Dave and Maggy have a beautiful custom home built right on the water at the confluence of Lake St Clair and the Detroit river at the north end of Windsor in the community of Tecumseh, Ontario. Maggy cooked barbecue chicken, baked potatoes, corn, salad followed by an ice cream and fresh blue berries and tea for desert. I had a hot shower later and slept fitfully with the sounds of breaking waves on the beach at the back of their house. They gave me the Presidential suite, the master bedroom, with an upper deck, an incredible washroom with a jacuzzi bath and separate shower. Maggy had laid out the fresh towels and bed linens. It's hard to reciprocate such hospitality. I offered my humble apartment this year for them at the 2018 GLSS AGM in January, but understandably they wanted to stay in the hotel at the location in downtown Toronto.

Saturday August 11th, 2018

It's a beautiful sunny, warm and calm this morning in Windsor. Dave's 81st birthday today. I got him a 40 once bottle of Dewar's scotch. Maggy got Dave the same bottle. Their next door neighbour Kenny Lesney later delivered the third bottle so Dave should be good for awhile. This morning Dave and I went to the Country diner, in Lakeshore for breakfast with Dave's biker friends. We then went on a tour of the magnificent mansions overlooking the lake St Clair water front in the Tecumseh area. We then toured the South Port boating club. It was there, where I met John Marintete, owner of a Melges 24. John has raced his Melges all over the Great Lakes including Lake Ontario and has raced out of PCYC. At 2pm we attended a nearby residence at 13626 St Gregory, Tecumseh, home of JP and Nancy for their annual barbecue for a Petangue tournament (Bocci ball). The French Canadians call it Petangue. There were several teams including myself and Marion. We won second place prize of a 'cork screw' place mat. Maggy and her partner JP ending up winning the coveted authentic Petangue trophy for first place. Dave Evans was presented with two birthday cakes for his 81st birthday. That evening we returned to Dave and Maggy's place and found the adjoining beach house neighbours were in 'full on' party mode. I met the owners of the houses next door Kenny Lesney, Tom and Marie Bondy, Mike Keshawn who lives across the street, Patricia (Pat) the artist and her roommate Dawn, their friends and siblings. Dawn and her girl friend Mary Jane (MJ) from the LSMYC were beach side stoking a huge beach bon fire while drinking and smoking the whacky tobacco. The festivities carried on late into the evening and early morning hours. The lightning off in the distance gave an impressive cinematic light show during the evening but the rain showers held off. It was a great time for all.

Sunday August 12th, 2018

Maggy cooked up a beautiful breakfast of eggs, toast, fried tomatoes, pea meal bacon with fresh coffee. At 1Pm Dave Evans and I attended the LSMYC for an information meeting chaired by their Commodore. I later presented their Commodore Larry Laing with our own PCYC burgee. We then gathered on the covered shaded patio next to Dave Evans boat. At the table were Dave Nada and his wife Mary, Bob Reaume, John Tracy, Bob Bigham, Nick Lyntoenan, Craig Morrison (Tiny) and Sarah. At 530pm we were back at Dave and Maggy Evans place. Maggy cooked a delicious chicken oriental stir fry for dinner. I retired to bed early that evening having a bit of jet lag from the previous late night neighbourhood party.

Monday August 13th, 2018.

It's another clear warm sunny day. Dave and I attended the LSMYC and met one of the haul out crew Jon Ray, a fire fighter in Windsor, and arranged for his boat Ratso to be hauled out for a wash down. Dave power washed the bottom, and I climbed top side and power washed the deck. We then nipped out to Tim Hortons for a quick lunch before returning to LSMYC. I met an interesting club member, William and Vivian owners of a C&C. They were a French Canadian couple who previously lived and sailed in Argentina and then moved to the Montreal area before arriving in the LaSalle area. By late afternoon we returned to Dave and Maggy's place and visited their neighbour Kenny Lesney, and his friends Art and Sofia. We were joined by Tom and Marie Bondy before being called to dinner. Maggy barbecued steaks, potatoes, salads followed by a desert of ice cream and blue berries.

Tuesday August 14th, 2018

Today is another hot, muggy humid day. Today I did my laundry hanging it outside on the clothes line. Maggy and I went to the local Canadian Tire and then Metro Groceries for provisions for the upcoming Lake Erie solo race. Their neighbour Tom Bondy dropped by to use Dave's router for a cutting block that he was making out of cherry wood. He later invited us back to his house for coffees and a tour of his home made Dulcimer guitars, and his very well equipped 'man cave' garage. Tom also collects beer tap handles. At lunch Dave cooked up some BLT pea meal sandwiches. Maggy was going out for a sail with a couple from LSMYC.

We ended up going out for dinner at Swiss Chalet in Tecumseh. Once back at Dave and Maggy's we watched a movie on their large flat screen TV.

Wednesday August 15th, 2018

Today is going to another muggy warm day. Maggy cooked up a spectacular breakfast of pea meal bacon, scrambled eggs, fried tomatoes and potatoes and mango banana fruit salad. After breakfast I said my good-byes to Maggy and Dave and I drove to LSMYC. I loaded the food and my bags onto the boat and at 1030am cast off. Dave Evans and Tony Berends ( Mongo Tiki, Tartan 10) helped me off the dock. I carefully followed the channel markers on a course of due south. Just after twelve noon I entered Lake Erie just as the freighter Algoma Buffalo was travelling the opposite direction. I continued to follow the main freighter channel out towards red marker 12 when I noticed a southbound down bound freighter identified on my AIS as the Canada Steamship line (CSL) Spruceglen. I gingerly moved just outside the freighter lane. The wind and waves are against me and I'm only doing four knots. As soon as this freighter passes I'll set a waypoint for the North Cape Yacht club at Monroe Michigan, my final destination today. At 121pm I set a waypoint for the entrance to the North Cape Yacht Club (NCYC) . I'm steering a course of 233 true at a speed of three knots, 16.21 nautical miles away. I had to adjust this slightly as I noticed it took me into two feet of water so I set a new waypoint of 228 true and then will have to make a turn towards the NCYC entrance. At 420pm I set the last waypoint to the entrance steering now a course of 248 true, 3.2 nautical miles away. It is very hot and humid aggravated by the hot engine. I'm sweating just sitting here. I called into Customs to report my arrival, I turned off the engine. Unfortunately I was put on hold for a long time and decided to hang up. When I tried to restart the engine the alarm went off so I again immediately shut it down. I'm guessing another piece of the impeller has dislodged and is impeding the flow of water. I tried again later and reduced the rpms which seemed to do the trick. At 530pm I entered the entrance and saw that Paul Nickerson (Nicknack) and John Ollila (Finnair) were already tied up on the wall outside the North Cape Yacht club (NCYC). I ended up rafting against Nicknack. Once tied up I managed to get through to customs and report my arrival. The Officer even facilitated a boating report number, a BR number, that all I have to do in the future is give that number to the Custom officials and all my information will come up. I met a new prospective GLSS member, Lawrence Visnic (Living the dream) on his Pearson 28. The sailboat racing fleet at NCYC were just leaving the harbour for their Wednesday night racing. There were doing a special for the race skippers and crew and of course the single handed skippers were invited to take part. For eight dollars you got a barbecued sausage on a bun, coleslaw, corn on the cob, tomato and Italian cheese and a slice of water melon.

Thursday, August 16th, 2018

Today is a overcast day with a light rain and a bit of a surge in the harbour for us boats that are situated on the wall in front of the NCYC. I noticed Alan Belovarac, on Moonbeam came in late last night. Paul Nickerson invited me on board for fresh coffee. While having our morning coffee we noticed a commercial diving service was cleaning the bottom of John Ollila's boat. The diver Eric Graham was offering to clean the boat for two dollars a foot which I thought was a pretty good deal. For fifty four dollars I now have a clean bottom for the race. I called Noel Brockman about my over heating problem and he advised to check the molded hose for evidence blocking the cooling and remove the thermostat. It would mean the engine would run a little cooler but would have been his next step towards solving the over heating problem. I finally removed the thermostat and bled the fuel lines but could not get the engine to start. I called a local diesel mechanic from the Toledo area, an outfit Alan Belovarac recommended called Burt's Marine. I spoke to a mechanic by the name of Alan who advised me to bleed the injector fuel line. That did the trick and the engine started right up. A few of the singlehanded sailors are starting to arrive including Rob Burger (Storms Harbor) and Brad Enterline, (Peace maker) from Erie, Pennsylvania. Wally McMinn (Odyssey) from NCYC dropped by to welcomed us. Marty Fox, on Tango, whom I later met, had arrived much earlier and left his boat on the wall

in front of Paul Nickerson boat. I received a telephone call this evening from long time single hander and good friend David Courtney who advised me that he'd be available to give me a hand through the Welland canal on the Thursday following the race.

Friday, August 17th, 2018

It's a warm overcast day with intermittent rain showers throughout the day. I'll definitely have to start my engine and charge my batteries today if the sun doesn't shine today. I repositioned my main anchor and cleaned out the anchor locker. I crossed over to the Toledo Beach marina and topped up the diesel tank with 2.757 US gallons. The fan belt keeps slipping on the slide so I had to secure it with vice grips. Wally McMinn arranged for John Ollila and I to be rafted together tucked behind the dingy crane to make room for the bigger boats that are anticipated to arrive later on today. At 10:10am I proceeded to run the engine to charge the batteries. I decided to plug in the battery charger. Noel Brockman ( Quick and Dirty) arrived with Blair Arden ( Otis B Driftwood) trailing. During the afternoon Mark Smith (Walkure 2) arrived. At about 3pm Lawrence Visnic, John Ollila, Noel Brockman, Alan Belovarac and I went to the local Grocery store for some last minute provisions on a car supplied by Wally McMinn. . When we got back to NCYC Lease Schock (Avatar), Dave Evans ( Ratso) and Russ Krock ( Shock N All) were all rafted off the wall. At 5pm the single handed sailors met at the bar for drinks and socializing. It was shortly after this time Dan Pavlat, ( Coconut Telegraph) arrived. At about 7pm the dinner was served and emceed by Wally McMinn then followed by our Race Chair Paul Nickerson. The dinner was a rack of pork ribs, green beans, baked potatoes, coleslaw followed by the famous make your own sundaes.

The current Commodore of the NCYC, Barbara Heidt was presented with her own Lake Erie Solo 2018 shirt and past Commodores present were introduced along with the staff responsible for putting on this fabulous dinner. The race committee gave a short run down of the starting sequence scheduled for a ten am start tomorrow morning. Each participant introduced themselves, outlining how many GLSS events they have taken part in, their boat name and make, home port, and other trivia. This year there are sixteen participants, four divisions based on their respective PHRF ratings. At least two boats registered but cancelled at the last few days.

Saturday August 18th, 2018. (Race day)

I awoke early to a warm overcast day. I showered and shaved and then started to get the boat ready for race mode. My rafting friend John Ollila from Fairport, Ohio is like me and likes to cast off early to check out his sails and place his life raft on top in the lazaret. We agreed we would cast off this morning at 9am. If the wind in the harbour is any indication it may be a spinnaker start. The forecast doesn't support this in fact it looks like a upwind beat to the Buffalo mark and then the winds are going to switch so it may be a beat to the finish at Erie, Pennsylvania. I will be happy to get going. At 7:30am the sailors were all in the club house for a light breakfast, water melon, donuts and coffee. The kitchen volunteers gave us a doggy bag of grapes and a water melon slice. The club volunteers here are absolutely amazing.

At 8:30am I cast off, and left the North Cape Harbour. I was the first out there but slowly the fleet exited followed soon by the race committee sailboat. At 10am the start went off with out incident and I set a course of 83 true which I just could not make. This was not one of my better timed starts. I was steering a course of 90 true. We had to navigate through what seemed like hundreds of fishing boats but by 11:30am we were past most of them. It's kind of a warm hazy day now with light winds out of the north east. The flies are also starting to bite. I could hear Noel Brockman chatting with Lease Schock about cooking hot dogs for lunch and whether Lease could smell them. They must be close way up front. At 5:35pm I charged the batteries, at 2000 rpm, steering a course of 64 true. Moonbeam is to my south and Storm Harbour is just ahead. At some point I'll have to tack to get around Pelee Point. I've lost my appetite which is common on these races for me. I better have a drink soon to avoid dehydration. I've only had fruit and two fig bars since the

race started. At about 8pm my evening dinner was a bowl of corn flakes. The wind out of the east has increased so I went with a full number one and double reefed main. It seemed like I was constantly tacking or avoiding at least three freighters up bound through the Pelee passage. Every time I tack in these winds the leech line velcro adjustment pulls out of the head sail.

Sunday August 19th, 2018

Brad Enterline, on Peace maker, auto helm failed and he was exhausted from hand steering. He 'hove to' to get some sleep and will attempt a repair. My auto helm constantly gybing the boat in these wind and waves. I'm at least 30 degrees off the rum line. The number one battery went quite low so I gave it m a good one hour charge after my 2am check in . It's a dreary overcast day this morning so I doubt my solar panels will be putting out very little amps. I did manage to get some sleep, despite the constant banging as the boat crashes into the waves like a wild bronco. I still don't have an appetite but will have a plum and a muffin for breakfast. I'm still 143 nautical miles to the Buffalo mark beating into an east wind with waves. Just before my 8am radio check in, I shook out the reef and the wind shifted favourably. I'm only twenty degrees off the rum line. At 803am I started to charge my batteries. The wind is starting to die. At 10am I'm only doing just over three knots and the waves have calmed down considerably. At around noon I tacked to the south east and picked up some wind, albeit it's still on the nose and I'm steering 122 true. My lunch today was crackers and smoked oysters with a little bit of spinach dip. Just after 2pm radio check in I charged my batteries. Brad Enterline on Peacemaker withdrew about an hour ago and is motoring to his home port at the Erie Yacht Club. He couldn't get his auto helm working after disassembling the unit for the sixth time, It would have been very difficult to hand steer in a long solo challenge. At 4pm Wally McMinn on Odyssey withdrew from the race due to time constraints and he is also motoring back to his home club of NCYC. Marty Fox on Tango, an Elite 32 has missed most of his radio check ins and the race chair Paul Nickerson has been unable to raise him on the VHF, He was close to me before the Pelee passage and there has been no severe weather. It may be a simple electronic failure. Most of the fleet, including myself are steering towards Ashtabula, Ohio, just west of Erie, Pennsylvania or east of Cleveland, Ohio and praying for a wind shift. At least we have some wind. I've been bitten on the ankle several times by those annoying stable flies. The boat is also covered with some sort of smaller flies, for some reason they are attracted to the transom area. I'm averaging around four nautical miles an hour but the wind is right out of the east since the start of this race. I seemed to have gotten my appetite back but don't feel like cooking anything substantial. I also thing I've caught up on my sleep from the previous night. I received information from Paul Nickerson that 'Tango' Marty Fox had withdrew and is now safely at a port Geneva on the US south shore.

Monday August 20th, 2018

I charged my batteries just after the 2am radio check in. At around 330am I heard a strange scraping sound along the deck. Incredibly the lower turn buckle had worked its way loose and the lower port shroud let go. I changed the standing rigging on that side and noticed Fogh Marine sold me the male component without a hole drilled at the ends to facilitate a split ring to prevent this. I jammed seizing wire and thought that would suffice. That thinking was obviously flawed and wrong. I could have lost the rig. I reattached the turn buckle and new split ring in the lower part. I will definitely have to have this drilled out. The wind died around 4am but has shifted favourably and I can almost make my course of 67degrees true. I'm 81.24 nautical miles from the Buffalo mark. I am only doing 3 knots but it's in the right direction. Time to get some sleep. At 638am I charged the batteries. The wind is favourable for a broad reach to Seneca shoal, 73.41 nautical miles away and I'm doing 5,5 knots, on a course of 67 true. I'm located near the middle of the lake but south of the main freighter lanes. At 1008am I was south of Long Point. The winds shifted from a broad reach to a close reach and the wind and waves diminished. I'm 53.64 nautical miles to Seneca shoal. My speed has reduced to just over four knots. The weather is warm and hazy day. The winds are light out of the southeast and now I'm steering a course of 64 true just off the rum line. 1100am: lunch was a can of salmon

and vinegar, a slice of bread, fruit cup and Doritos chips. The winds are really light and I'm only doing 2.5 knots. At the 2pm radio check in I learned Blair Arden, Otis B Driftwood is heading home, presumably he's with drawing. My auto helm is really acting up and cannot seem to hold a course on a port tack. I switched to battery two which was fully charged and after the radio check in charged my batteries. The wind has really picked up but is still on the nose out of the east. Most of the faster boats have already rounded Seneca shoal. Just after 4pm I double reefed the main sail for a more comfortable auto helm friendly ride, I'm now 40 nautical miles from the turning mark at Buffalo. It also allows me to keep the forward hatch open for a fresh air flow inside the cabin. There's some oily bilge water that has made the cabin sole very slippery. On this tack I'm steering 102 true and the rum line is 66 true. No breaks on the wind direction. I'm doing a comfortable 5.6knots on this port tack. I've flattened my 'Taylor made' marine seat across the Dometic cooler so I can rest horizontally from each side of the main salon. I can even sleep in this position on a port tack. It was some time after 5pm I shook out the double reef on the main. Unfortunately this I-Pad mini that I use to make up this journal went flying off the shelf landing on the cabin floor. The plastic cover broke off but otherwise it seems to be working. The waves as expected in an east wind are starting to diminish the closer I get to Buffalo. I'm headed directly at Dunkirk but will have to tack out to the rum line before that. At my 8pm radio check in I am now getting a favourable wind to the mark, about 30 nautical miles to go. I'm starting to hear the faster boats that have already rounded including Finnair, Storms Harbour, Walkure 2, Ratso, Avatar, and Coconut Telegraph. At 809pm I charged my batteries.

Tuesday August 21st, 2018

I had to double reef the main sail. Just after midnight I learned Living the dream, Lawrence Visnic was about a quarter mile away. He rounded Seneca shoal light at 128am and I went around at 159am. The Seneca shoal light is very difficult to see and you have to use your gps to find it. There are so many background red blinking lights with the wind mills in the background. After and during the rounding my boat started to get out of control so I doused the number one head sail stuffing it down the forward hatch and put up the number three head sail. The winds are blowing a sustained 20 plus knots. I set a course to the finish line at the outer channel markers that leads to the Erie harbour, 60 nautical miles away. It was a very windy close reach all the way. I was close to Lawrence Visnic, 'Living a dream' all the way. For some reason he headed out into the lake in the vicinity of Erie, Pennsylvania. I found out later he just had fallen asleep. At 330.32pm I crossed the finish line just as a rain squall descended on the area. After tidying up I made my way to the Erie Yacht club. I just got tied up when a second severe cell hit the area. Noel Brockman registered 34 knots of wind as this cell roared through. We all met at the bar for pre dinner drinks and socializing. At 7pm we all attended the Erie Yacht club restaurant. Our hosts were Commodore Greg Gorney and past Commodore Brad Enterline both of whom are single handed sailors. We ordered off the menu. During the middle of the meal everyone went out sailing to help Lawrence Visnic, on Living a Dream ( a Pearson 28) tie up and congratulate him on his finish and now a life time membership into the Great Lakes Single handed Society. We all clapped after he was tied up and shook his hand, a hero's welcome, the last boat to arrive. Each competitor is given the customary bottom of dark rum. Lawrence good friend who put him up for this race Jim Lee was also at the dock to greet his friend. Now the pressure is on Jim to compete in next years GLSS challenge.

Wednesday, August 22nd, 2018

Today will be the awards banquet at 1 pm but first as it is a custom breakfast at Avanti's in Frontier, part of the city of Erie. Brad Enterline and Greg Gorney are scheduled to pick us up around 830am here at the Erie Yacht club. Brad Enterline made two trips up to Avanti's where we all sat at a large table. Present were Dave Evans (Ratso), Noel Brockman ( Quick and Dirty), Mark Smith (Walkure2), Russ Krock, ( Schock N All), John Ollila (Finnair) and Dan Pavlat, (Coconut Telegraph). At 1130am the single handed competitors started

to gather for pre lunch drinks. The lunch served by the Erie Yacht club staff was an incredible three styles of salad, breaded chicken breasts, hot sliced roast beef and of course make your own sundaes. At about 1Pm Race Chair Paul Nickerson emceed the event and the various flags were awarded to the competitors. Paul was assisted by Commodore Greg Gorney's five year old grandson Owen. Each competitor has to get up and give a brief speech of their interpretation, thoughts and comments of this years Lake Erie solo challenge. Sorry if you are too shy to talk in front of a group but everybody has to say a few words, no exceptions. It was nice to see in attendance some of past competitors including Aaron Ackerman ( Fortunes Son) whom I remember from the 2015 Lake Erie solo race. Aaron tried to anonymously buy a round of drinks for our dinner later in the evening but I figured out quickly he was the culprit. Today, being a Wednesday is race night here at the Erie Yacht club. The race committee do the flag and sound signals from ashore from an observation building located on the south east side of the club. Spectators have a shore side, excellent view of the start line from this location. The boats race to marks around the bay and about two minutes after leaving the Harbour you are already at the start line. A bunch of us gathered in the club house for dinner. At our table was Dan Pavlat, John Ollila, Noel Brockman, Dave Evans, Mark Smith and Paul Nickerson. I said my good byes to everyone and then walked back to Storms Harbor, Rob Burger, Lease Schock and Lawrence Visnic we're gathered for drinks and dinner on Robs boat. I said my goodbyes to everyone, here whom I called the Sandusky guys. Apparently for dinner they had lobster pot pies and fancy appetizers.

Thursday August 23rd, 2018

I started to prep the boat for the trip to Port Colborne, located about 60 nautical miles from the Erie Yacht club. I vacuumed out the bilge, topped up the engine oil. All the single handed sailors including myself went back to Avanti's for breakfast. Commodore Greg Gorney lent us his car and we had to do two trips to accommodate all of us. We all sat at the same table and sang Happy Birthday to our waitress Jaime. Just after 10am I topped up the diesel fuel with 1.68 US gallons. Paul Nickerson, Dan Pavlat and Lawrence Visnic helped me cast off and also met me at the fuel dock. At 1017am I cleared the Erie Yacht club harbour and followed the channel out. Once outside the bay in the main channel I put my sails up and set a course for Port Colborne, 54 nautical miles away on a course of 40 true. The wind and waves are favourable for a broad reach on a warm sunny day. I'm hitting in excess of seven knots regularly and the auto helm seems to be holding the course. At some point I surfed down a wave and reached 10.3 knots! (Twice!)

I'll have to keep an eye on the fully laden Algoma Compass, she's doing 12.4 knots steering a course of 58 degrees true and obviously headed to the Welland canal. I just can't believe the speeds I'm doing on this broad reach with just my cruising head sail. I'm regularly reaching speeds of 8 plus knots. What a ride. I'm actually excited to be headed home via the Welland canal. As soon as I get into the Sugarloaf Marina and clear customs I'll give my good friend David Courtney a call. He volunteered to help bring the boat down bound through the canal and then on to the Port Credit Yacht club. I've arranged for a new slip on dock C15. Suzette Newton at PCYC has already upgraded my membership back to Senior. At 520pm I had to finally tuck in a double reef into the main sail. I was just out of control and on the verge of wiping out. The port sheet bow line flogged until the bow line came undone. I now have 19.34 nautical miles to go to the Sugarloaf Marina. It looks like the Algoma Compass has passed well in front of me. Even at 10.3 knots I cannot catch up with a freighter. These waves are huge and have been building from the west for the past two days. At 9pm I entered the Welland canal harbour and at 915pm I was safely tied up on the main dock at Sugarloaf Marina in Port Colborne. The very helpful dock attendant, Ian stuck around to make sure I got safely tied up, delivered the washroom card key and offered to tell me about the amenities of the marina. I cleared in with Customs border authorities and was issued a reporting number. I called Dave Courtney just to confirm my arrival and go over some minor logistics. Now that was what I call a pretty fast broad reach.

Friday August 24th, 2018

Today is another sunny windy day. I got up early to shower and use the facilities. I checked in to the marina and paid for my mooring. As soon as Dave Courtney arrives I'll call Seaway Control for the St. Lawrence Seaway (905 641 1932, extension 5454) when they can accommodate us. Apparently they monitor channel 14. There's a Blue Seas blog about the Welland canal. The attendant kindly printed off the six page information sheets on transiting the canal.

Some interesting facts,

The canal 23.5 nautical miles long and runs on a north south axis. There are eight locks. We will be starting at eight and finishing at one near Port Weller, Ontario. The controlling depth of the canal is 27 feet. According to the Blue Seas blog the average transit time is 11 hours.

A boat from Chicago, Illinois an Island packet 43, 'No Worries' pulled in late last night. This morning I met the crew and the skipper/ owner Bill Fagerstrom. Bill knew Mark Gannon, Jim McClaren and Joe Turns solo GLSS Chicago members. He's a GLSS member himself having done the solo Chicago to Mackinac Island Race three times in the early 2000's, it's a small World! They are headed to Mystic, Connecticut where it will stay for a year, then they plan on crossing the Atlantic to the Azores then cruise the UK and ultimately they'll going to Sweden. Bill's wife is from there.

Dave arrived and I promptly called Seaway Control. They said it was busy and nothing would happen until at least 1Pm. I was advised to monitor channel 14 and they took down my particulars including my cell number.

At about 1215pm Seaway Control called and advised me to proceed to the town docks just outside lock 8. At around 130pm we were told to enter the lock as soon as an up bound freighter clears my location. Dave and I locked through without incident. Going down is an easy gentle process. At 930pm we were through our last lock and set a course to Dave's home port the Lake shore Yacht club (LSYC). We had a favourable south wind and motor sailed all the way to LSYC.

Saturday, August 25th, 2018.

At 130am we were safely tied up at LSYC and crashed on our boats for some much needed sleep.

I was up early and at 635am motor sailed over to the Port Credit Yacht Club (PCYC) and pulled into my new slip at C15. Rob McVicar, my boat neighbour was there to help tie me up. It turns out my old slip became available yesterday so I will definitely apply for it as soon as it is posted on Sep