



The  
**SOLO  
CHALLENGER**



The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society

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**FALL 2009**

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**2010 Annual General Membership Meeting  
held at the  
Dossin Great Lakes Museum  
on historic Belle Isle, Detroit  
January 16, 2010**

By Jocelyn (Jo) Buckingham – AGM Social Chair

Ahoy Captains,  
Yes, it is that time of year again. January 16<sup>th</sup> 2010 is just a couple of winter and spring to-do lists away. And your GLSS Board of Director's is requesting your attendance at the 2010 GLSS Annual General Meeting, be at the top of the list. This is an open invitation to the around-the-buoy racers as well.

**Belle Isle, Detroit**

The Dossin Great Lakes Museum will be the GLSS's exclusively for the evening. Nestled alongside the Detroit Coast Guard Station on the Detroit River, the Museum houses the most comprehensive history of the Great Lakes. Please use the link below.

<http://www.detroithistorical.org/main/dossin/exhibitions.aspx>



**Above:** Dossin Great Lakes Museum Exhibits

Special Guest and world renowned Brad Van Liew will present his next "Around the World Solo" Velux - 5 Oceans 2010 Campaign called the "Lazarus Project" after you enjoy the epicurean delight sure to please the most discriminatory palate. All

this for just \$60.00 per person. Please be so kind to RSVP with your Pay Pal payment or check written to the GLSS.

The Atheneum all-Suite / AAA Four Diamond Hotel located in Greek town <http://www.atheneumsuites.com> (The entertainment heartbeat of Detroit) will be the GLSS's launching/landing pad. There is a 20 room block for the GLSS @ \$139.00 plus tax, includes a free shuttle to/from the Museum. With opening night of the Auto Show the same night it is impossible to get any better rates with a shuttle. Please call (313) 962 2323 to make your reservations before 12/28/2009.



### Brad Van Liew Lazarus Project Announcement

Brad Van Liew is going for his 3<sup>rd</sup> around the world solo campaign named the "Lazarus Project". Just imagine what it takes to make it to the starting line that is only months away. We have individually lived through our own Solo Sailing campaigns and know that well intentioned planning is just the price of admission. The seriousness of the jobs needing to be completed, deadlines and staying undefeated with boat systems and equipment before departing can be a challenge in itself. In addition, the new "ECO 60 Class Goal is to race around the world without using a drop of diesel fuel, proving that modern solo racing no longer requires it".

Brad Van Liew completed his first "Around Alone Race in 1998-99 on the Open 50 "Balance Bar". Brad's second Around Alone was in 2002-03 on the Open 50 "Tommy Hilfiger Freedom America". Entering the

Velux 5 Ocean Race for a third time on a ECO 60 Class is going to require Brad to tell us about it at the 2010 AGM!



**Above:** Brad Van Liew (left) and Sir Robin Knox Johnston after press conference. For more information Visit: <http://www.oceanracing.org>



### Congratulations to our new Chicago-Mackinac Solo Challenge Members!

Please join the GLSS Board in welcoming new members **Mark Mohowald (2009 Presidents Trophy Recipient), Martin Grow and Bruce Carter** into the Great Lakes Single Handed Society. All three new members logged an impressive 5+ days reaching the Island to finish their first GLSS Solo Challenge!

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## **2010 Solo Challenges to be scheduled:**

<i>June</i>	<i>32<sup>nd</sup> Port Huron to Mackinac &amp; 14<sup>th</sup> Chicago to Mackinac Solo Challenge</i>
<i>July</i>	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Lake Ontario Solo Challenge</i>
<i>August</i>	<i>4<sup>th</sup> Lake Erie Solo Challenge</i>
<i>August</i>	<i>Lake Superior Solo Scramble</i>
<i>September</i>	<i>Lower Lake Huron Solo</i>
<i>September</i>	<i>Lake Michigan Solo Scramble</i>
<i>September 26</i>	<i>St. Clair Solo &amp; Big Al's Steak Roast</i>
<i>August 2011</i>	<i>4<sup>th</sup> Sault Ste. Marie to Duluth Tran-Superior Solo Challenge</i>

*Be sure to check the website often for details on these events!*

**<http://www.solosailor.org>**



## **How to get Invited for a Get-Away AGM Weekend**

Well, the only way you can get invited without actually inviting yourself is through subtle tactics.

Start laying-down some clues for yourself: Make it known once and only once that you'd love to see the Dossin Great Lakes Museum and hear Brad Van Liew speak at the 2010 AGM. Anything more will seem desperate.

Then build from there: Drop hints whenever possible that you have no plans for that weekend and need to get some moral support to do next year's solo challenges. Remind yourself that you do not want to miss out on hearing the greatest stories ever told from your fellow GLSS members at the AGM. Then pick up the clues and pay your dues. Once things start to fall into place you will find yourself having a great time at the 2010 Annual General Membership Meeting!

## **We need your Log-in:**

**[www.solosailor.org/contact\\_updateinfo](http://www.solosailor.org/contact_updateinfo)**

Use the above link to submit or update your Contact Information!

# THE INAUGURAL LAKE ONTARIO SOLO CHALLENGE

By Wally McMinn

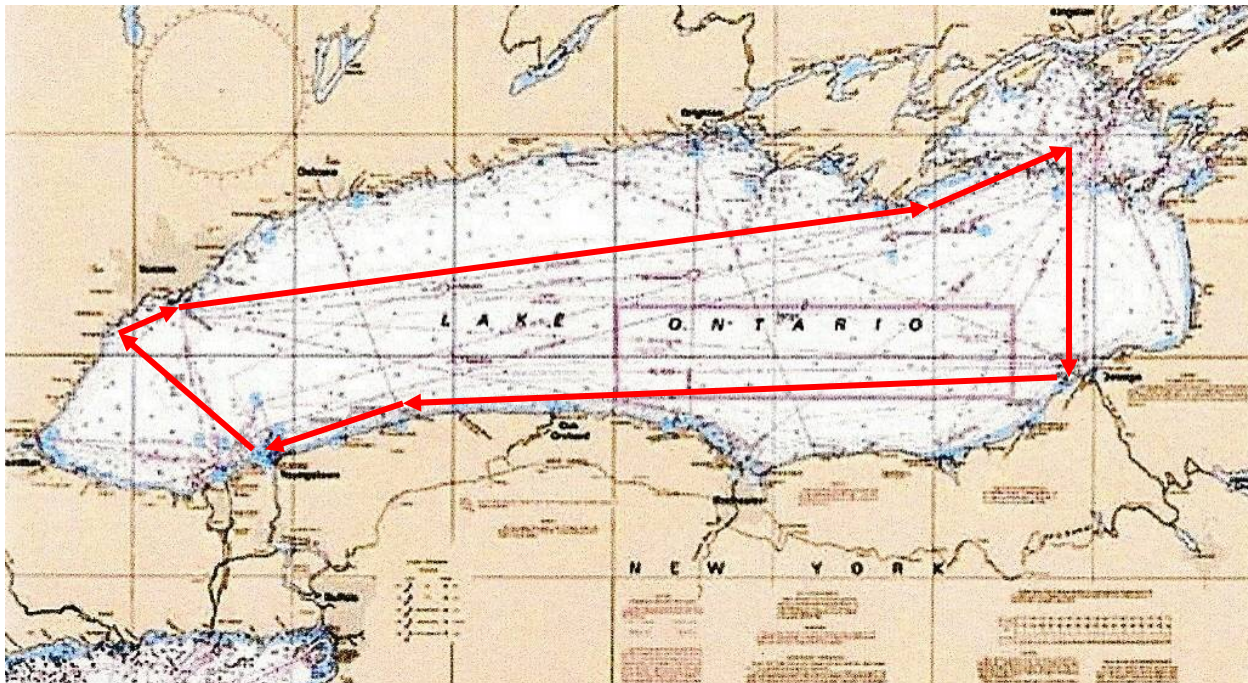
After a number of years of discussions within GLSS and with various individuals on Lake Ontario the final link in the GLSS Challenge package has been completed. On Saturday August 16<sup>th</sup>, Dan Pavlat, Walt Norris, and Wally McMinn joined approximately one hundred and seventy crewed race boats for the start of the Lake Ontario 300. The singlehanded class was designated the Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenge (LO300SC) and was jointly sponsored by the LO300 and GLSS.



*Photo Credit: Jill Pavlat*

**Above:** 2009 LO300SC Participants Dan Pavlat, Wally McMinn, and Walt Norris

The event included a 300 nautical mile course (the Main Duck Islands course), and a shorter 190 nautical mile course (the Scotch Bonnet course). The Solo Challenge sailed the 300 mile course which is a counterclockwise circumnavigation of Lake Ontario. The singlehanded contingent was at the back of the start sequence which was helpful in avoiding the usual melee at the start line.



**"The LO300 and Solo Challenge Race Course"**

Walt (aboard Yuk Fu II) and Dan (aboard TAZ) quickly caught up with the fleet and began to pick their way through. I suspect they surprised quite a number of the crewed boats as they passed them. Walt finished with an elapsed time of 2:5:39:35, with Dan not far behind at 2:13:00:50. Wally (aboard Odyssey) also caught up with the fleet, but then cruised along behind for the rest of the event, finishing in 3:16:26:00. I think we made the point that there is a place for every sailing temperament in GLSS Challenges.

The event is hosted by the Port Credit Yacht Club (PCYC), which is located a few miles to the east of Toronto. PCYC is one of the premier yacht clubs on Lake Ontario, and has hosted the annual LO300 for twenty years. The event was begun as a double handed event, then gradually added fully crewed classes, and the short course. The LO300 Race Committee and folks at PCYC could not have been more supportive or gracious. PCYC is a large Club occupying a large deep water harbor. There is a large sailing contingent in the Club, and they sponsor a broad range of youth and small boat sailing regattas.

Lake Ontario has a very large and growing fleet of singlehanded and double handed sailors who participate in the popular Lake Ontario Short Handed Racing Series (LOSHRS) events. Many of these sailors expressed interest in the singlehanded class, and plan to participate in future years. There were no Lake Ontario sailors in the 2009 event primarily due to the short lead time between GLSS and LO300 approvals and the application deadline. The LOSHRS series also includes a 100 nautical mile event which is being adapted for 2009 to assure that those interested in future Challenges meet the 24 hour GLSS Qualifying Sail requirement. There were also difficulties in finding raft rentals as the LO300 does not require a raft.



Photo Credit: Wally McMinn

**Above:** Walt Norris with some of the fleet in the background

The LO300SC event was patterned after the successful GLSS Trans Superior Sault Ste. Marie to Duluth Solo Challenge where GLSS partnered with a long-standing, respected event. Our GLSS Board of Directors has given its strong support for the 2009 event, and has indicated it supports the minor change in our GLSS Constitution which will make a LOSC a Membership Granting event. That amendment will be presented at the 2010 AGM to be held in January in Detroit.

The growth of GLSS on Lake Ontario will be based primarily on sailors from that Lake for a number of reasons. Boats from the other lakes must either be trailered, as were TAZ and Yuk Fu II, or transit the Welland Canal (the Odyssey). That passage is both long, and costly. For many who choose to make the voyage to participate in a LOSC, it could be in conjunction with a cruise on Lake Ontario. The Lake is beautiful, with many places to visit and enjoy.

The 2009 LO300SC will be reviewed over the next months by both GLSS and the LO300 Race Committee with an eye to possible revisions for future years, but the basic event will likely remain the same. Contact one of the 2009 participants for ideas on how you might participate. Additional contacts are: LO300: [www.lo300.org](http://www.lo300.org), PCYC: [www.pcy.net](http://www.pcy.net).

## The 3<sup>rd</sup> TranSuperior Solo Challenge

By John Ayres

Sailors arrived from the Great Lakes of Michigan, Huron, Erie and Superior to start pre-race registration activities Thursday August 6th at Sioux Ste. Marie. Racers of the Crewed, Double and Solo Fleets grouped at the George Kemp Marina (Stars and Stripes side) and Roberta Bondar Marina (Maple Leaf side) just beneath the mighty St. Mary's Fall's (and Hydro). Last minute preparations, border crossings, visitation from Homeland Security and Customs, last minutes with family/friends, weather reports and sizing-up the competition were all part of the pre-race buzz.

GLSS contestants and friends meet for dinner Thursday evening at a River-Side restaurant and were advised of this season's cold Lake temperature by Superior veteran Nelson Thomas (Eric Thomas's Father). Fortunately, provisioning for winter hats and gloves was not a problem on the Canadian side during the summer.

The Skippers Meeting was held Friday morning at the Marina Pavilion Amphitheater with Eric Thomas presiding over all pre-race details for the Crewed, Double-Handed and GLSS Solo Sections. ION Earth Trackers were handed out to all competitors with financial sponsorship from Barker's Island Marina – (thanks again Eric). Skipper introductions were made and individual questions answered in true Western-Superior Eric Thomas fashion. After the Skippers Meeting a nicely arranged BBQ Lunch was conveniently offered in the Pavilion to the Racers at a minimal charge.

Saturday morning of a TranSuperior Challenge means "locking through" the Canadian Locks and traveling the upper St. Mary's River to lower Whitefish Bay for the afternoon start of the GLSS Challenge.



**Above:** Walt Norris pictured with some of the fleet in the Canadian Locks

A mixture of low level precipitation and blustery conditions added to the reluctance of many boats to set their spinnakers until after the downwind start. Special thanks to the Sioux Ste. Marie Committee boat for a great start! After rounding Whitefish point the advection fog intensified, fueled by the cold depths of Lake Superior and summer's moist heat.



**Above:** A momentary clearing during the TranSuperior Challenge.

The Fleet reached through the fog and 6 Degree Celsius waters for the next 60-70 miles until a 80 mile round super-cell moving east at 35 knots crossed the Fleet at 2 A.M Sunday morning . Winds veered

west after the storm just in time for sailing west around the Keweenaw Peninsula which was in sight for almost a day before rounding.



**Above:** RipTide in hot pursuit of Class leader "Loki" (Mike McDonald) and fleet.

The fog lifted by noon and was replaced by 18-24 knots of WSW breeze on the nose. It was a Sunscreen and chap-stick day beating southwest in the glimmering seas with second reefs and a keen eye for the occasional breaking wave. (I'll skip the sloppy, diminishing/veering wind part with mixed seas) and just say that by Monday morning the Fleet was on their way to the Apostle Islands with improving and much lighter conditions. The stars were out on Monday evening and calm conditions gave the Solo Fleet some time to rest while they moved past the fleet. By sun-up Tuesday the winds began to fill-in with a fair amount of wind shear aloft which made for some unbelievable tacks. The race to the finish was smooth sailing from the Apostle Islands to Duluth with a beautiful sun-set Tuesday evening.

The Great Lakes Aquarium Educational Center overlooking the Duluth Harbor was once again Race Headquarters and was staffed by the Duluth Yacht Club Race Committee that went above and beyond to finish all boats at the Pier head with hearty congratulations.



**Above:** Picture taken seven hours from the finish-line and about 30 miles to go.

Special thanks to the city of Duluth who once again cleared the City Berth and welcomed TranSuperior Racers to stay and provided essential amenities.

A combined awards banquet for the Crewed and Solo Sections were held at the Kitchi Gammi Club over-looking Lake Superior. Eric Thomas presented the Awards to the various crewed race sections and handed out GLSS Solo Section Flags and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual TranSuperior Challenge Medallions.



**Above:** Eric Thomas and GLSS Presidents Award recipient Jeff Roney (left).

The 2009 TranSuperior also brought-in three new GLSS Members. **Jeff Roney, Mike McDonald both from Thunder Bay Ontario and Scott Schoeler from Superior Wisconsin** (Right next to Duluth). Congratulations to all 2009 TranSuperior GLSS Solo Challenge participants!

## **Automatic Identification System (AIS) Transponder Review**

By John Ayres

During the TranSuperior Solo Challenge I had the opportunity to try-out a new "Class A" (transmit and receive) AIS system. I was shocked that upon finishing-up the late evening AIS wiring project and initializing the display unit, the first thing that happened was a collision alarm sounding and a display that read "Collision Alert". "Was this another wiring job gone wrong?"

As luck would have it I was "moored" at the DeTour Village Marina near the mouth of the St. Mary's River and all shipping traffic underway between Lake Superior and Lake Huron. I looked out the companionway towards the shipping lanes and saw the white bridge deck of a south-bound cargo ship passing 100 meters to my stern.

I cancelled the alarm and noticed on the display that there was more shipping traffic within 3 miles from my marina slip that I could not even see if it wasn't for the AIS.

After reviewing the different boats on the display I could see that there was an up-bound freighter moving away from my position and the Cockburn Island Ferry making another run towards the Detour dock just to the south of the marina. All this information after just the first 2 minutes of powering-up the AIS system!

Other than being entertained with the details on the types of vessels within your AIS range (cargo, tugs, ferry, pleasure craft, sailing vessel ect..) the AIS system also allows you to see their status (speed, heading, rate of turn, position, draft, beam, length, moored, under auxiliary power, fishing, sailing, destination, ect..) and shows you other vessels bearings and distances from your position.

The "Class A" AIS also allows other boats to see your information and navigation status. This was apparent when I arrived in

North Port Marina and had 3 boaters' great me at the gas dock to ask, "Are you RipTide? We were watching you on AIS sailing in from Charlevoix in the bad weather".

To which I replied, "Yes, I am RipTide, and I'm stopping in for dinner. Can you recommend a restaurant while the wind switches to the NW after this storm? I have another 200 miles to sail to Racine Wisconsin." (I think they will remember me like I will remember the "Drive Thru Café" for southern smoked BBQ and Northwoods Black Cherry Cream Soda – in North Port)

The most important information the AIS system provides is something called "CPA" which is the "Closest Point of Approach" and is an AIS system calculation of the closest point to be achieved between two vessels at a future point in time. These calculations are displayed and updated every 4 seconds.

The AIS also calculates TCPA which is the "Time" vessels will take to reach the CPA. The AIS Range is determined by your vessels (VHF frequency) antenna mounting location and the set range of the AIS display which is usually 25 nautical miles.

Here are some benefits I have experienced while operating a "Class A" AIS system over the first 3 weeks in operation this summer:

- 1) "Lakers" called "RipTide" (over Channel 16 -by name!) when the CPA was less than half a mile and to consult on a navigation plan to increase the CPA.
- 2) An over taking vessel "BBC Chile" had called to advise RipTide(1 hour in advance) that our ETA to the entrance of Grays Reef Channel would be at the same time and requested my navigation intentions.



- 3) 100% success raising Commercial Traffic when called by name on VHF channel 16
- 4) Ships see you along with other traffic operating AIS and discuss your navigation status concurrently with other shipping traffic over the VHF.
- 5) Big brother can see you (local law enforcement and Homeland Security/Coast Guard) and you can send emergency text messages (sinking, fire, pirate attack ect.) to other AIS equipped vessels in your area.
- 6) AIS "Class A" Transmissions are frequently turned off for "stealth mode" (receive only) by Law Enforcement and larger pleasure-craft (must be afraid of the Great Lakes Pirates).
- 7) I can now clearly avoid sailing in front of other AIS "Class A" vessels and can allow for a generous CPA in any weather condition.
- 8) VHF conversation with the Captain of the Laker "American Mariner" when converging on the fogged-in racing Fleet: "What! You're the only boat racing with AIS? I can only see 3 other boats in front of me on Radar". I let the Captain know that I would tack to increase CPA and to be on the look-out for westbound race traffic.
- 9) I can now see Law Enforcement, Coast Guard, and commercial boat activity in Kenosha and Milwaukee Wisconsin from my home-port slip in Racine.

- 10) You can transmit destinations like "TranSuperior Solo Challenge Finish Line - Duluth"



Would you like to be kept abreast of news and updates concerning the GLSS, or sign up to receive the official newsletter of the GLSS, the ***Solo Challenger?*** If so, please [complete the sign-up form.](#)



## 5 Great Lakes Challenges

The GLSS Solo Challenges are incredible opportunities to experience your own self reliance, exercise your sailing skills and execute your own race strategy over hundreds of miles and over multiple days of non-stop sailing. We now have events in all 5 Great Lakes and many members are stretching their horizons by sailing to/from GLSS Solo Challenges which may be several Great Lakes away.

Sometimes it may feel like a challenge just leaving the dock and making it to the starting line in your "home" Great Lake. Consider a Michigan to Erie, Superior to Ontario or a Huron

to either end of the Great Lakes for the start of a Solo Challenge. The reality to accomplish this may seem a little over-whelming at first until you consider the options for your boat delivery.

You should think of this as a “Pre and Post” and/or “warm-up or cool down” delivery challenge. One option is to go it alone and take impromptu “bonus” lay-over visits to unknown ports-o-call to rest-up a bit before pushing-on. Another option may be to take along crew that can help with the delivery. This option sounds great, however, it requires some extra up-front logistics planning and expense for crew movement to/from the boat. This option may also lock you into an arrival schedule which limits your delivery route options. A more difficult option is to berth your vessel somewhere along your destination for an extended time which is near ground/air transportation and continue your delivery at some future date. And finally there is the hired boat delivery option with a reputable Captain to complete the task.

Prior to attempting any Solo Challenge you should always allow some “pre-race” time to rest-up, inspect and repair, register with the Race Committee and relax with the other Racers.

This summer I scheduled 3 weeks vacation and allowed one week to make it from Racine Wisconsin to the Soo for the start, one week to complete the TranSuperior Solo Challenge and one week to make it all the way back to Racine Wisconsin from Duluth Minnesota. Always keeping in mind that there is 168 hours per week to sail, I made it up to the Soo in 50 hours with 118 hours of lay-over prior to the Solo Challenge. The Solo Challenge took 86 hours to complete with 82 hours left over “to holiday” with GLSS members in Duluth. After hitting the “invert route button”, 102 hours of sailing landed me back in Racine which included 66 hours of lay-over in Bayfield/ Hooton/ Sault Ste. Marie/ Charlevoix/ North Port and finally

Racine(I took Sunday off to kick-back aboard and warm-up the grill).

The entire journey was just over 1500 miles of which 1200 Miles was down-wind Sailing!

Does this sound like a good time? Well, only if you plan on participating in a new Solo Challenge and decide to stretch your horizons!



**Above:** Entering Keweenaw Bay and “Superior East” from the Keweenaw Waterway after the TranSuperior Solo Challenge



**Spring Solo Challenger articles and pictures needed from GLSS events. If you wish to contribute to this publication, please contact: John Ayres**



**Above:** RipTide under attack by Giant Sea Lamprey Eel while motoring up the St. Mary’s River.