



The
**SOLO
 CHALLENGER**



The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society

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Winter 2010

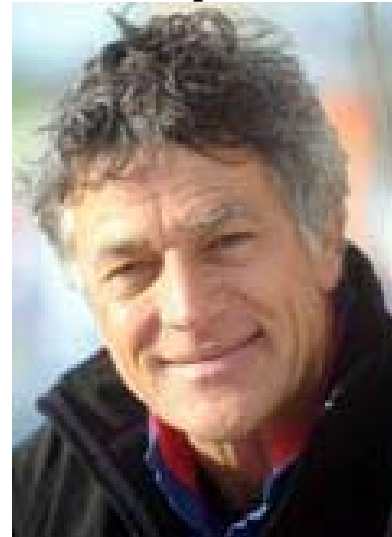
**Annual General Membership
 Meeting January 29, 2011
 In Chicago**

The 2011 AGM will be held at Maggiano’s Italian Restaurant located at 516 North Clark Street, Chicago on Saturday January 29, 2011 (Member Invitations enclosed – seating is limited).

GLSS Members will be meeting for Pre-AGM activities during the Chicago Strictly Sail Show held at Navy Pier January 27-30th. Plan ahead and join in the fun of participating at the GLSS Information Booth and take the opportunity to meet one of the youngest American Solo Sailors to sail around the world at the show! We will need your assistance in answering the tough questions about Solo Sailing and about the GLSS Solo Challenges at the show.



Etienne Giroire to Speak at AGM



Solo Sailor and Sailing Industry Professional Etienne Giroire will be our Guest Speaker at the 2011 AGM. Renowned for his short-handed and sailing gear innovations sold around the world, Etienne will share his most recent epic tale about the events leading up to his rescue at sea while participating in the 2010 Route Du Rhum. (Etienne was the only American Solo Skipper to participate in Route Du Rhum and was rescued 900 miles from the Azores and 1500 Miles from Guadeloupe from his capsized Tri-Moran on November 13, 2010)

Strictly Sail - Chicago

Navy Pier Show Hours:

Thurs/Fri January 27/28 11am-8pm

Saturday January 29 9am-8pm

Sunday January 30 10am-5pm

Planning on assisting with the GLSS Booth?

Call John Ayres 708-865-3380 for more details.



Back by Popular Demand

For the AGM event you do not want to miss, we have secured once again, the Amalfi Hotel for GLSS Members during their stay in Chicago. (Reduced from 2009 Rates!)

The Discounts are as Follows:

King Bed: \$104

Twin Queens: \$114

Parking \$20

Navigate your Way to the AGM



Get online to check out the “extras” at the Amalfi. To book your room, go to the [Amalfi Hotel Chicago reservation system.](#)

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Directions to the GLSS AGM at Maggiano's

Restaurant from Detroit or Milwaukee from the Dan Ryan 90/94 Expressway:

Take the EAST OHIO ST exit, EXIT 50B. > Stay STRAIGHT to go onto W OHIO ST > Turn RIGHT onto CLARK ST. > Go to the Corner of Clark St. & Grand Ave > Maggiano's is located at 516 North Clark St

Directions from Navy Pier:

Exit Navy Pier & Stay STRAIGHT to go onto Grand Ave. > Go West 1 nautical mile to the Corner of Grand Ave. & Clark St > Maggiano's is located at 516 North Clark St



2010 Lake Erie Challenge

By Paul Nickerson

August 28th the fleet gathered at North Cape Yacht Club for the start of the 4th Annual Lake Erie Solo Challenge.

The previous challenges always seemed to start with an impending front ready to come through but this year the forecast was for a stationary high waiting for a hurricane to move off the East Coast. The forecast was simply “light and variable winds for 3 days”. Friday the fleet enjoyed the hospitality of

North Cape and some lively discussions anticipating a slow sail though the islands and towards Buffalo.

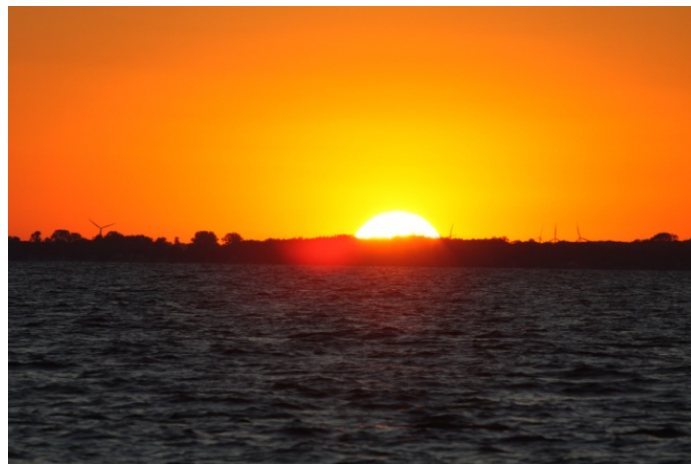


Saturday morning the start was as expected, light southerly breezes and a spinnaker parade from the start. The breeze held for several hours and then slowly shifted east. Walt Norris was able to sail tight on the breeze and work into a lead while the rest of the fleet fell behind just enough to have a beat around Pele Point and the Southeast Shoal.



While Walt sailed straight for Buffalo others spent several hours trying to clear the shoal. Jim Turner didn't quite clear it and ended up stuck in the sand on the shoal. After trying everything to get off and continue, he finally had to crank up the engine and was able to back out. The rest of the fleet stayed well clear.

***Be sure to check the website often for details about all GLSS events!
<http://www.solosailors.org>***



Overnight the winds stayed light out of the SE allowing for steady progress. An awesome full Moon came up to light the way. The winds held all night and as twilight dawned the winds started to shift back south. It wasn't long until the spinnakers were all flying on beam reaches and a beautiful sunrise awoke the fleet.

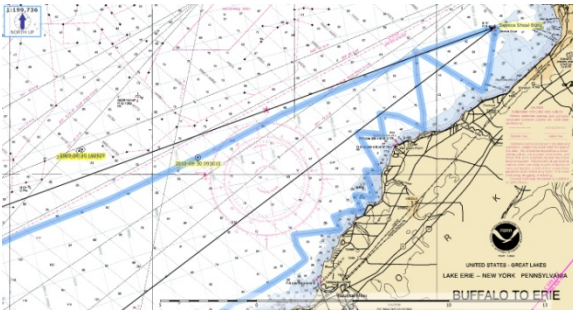


Sunday proved to be a copy of Saturday's weather, not a cloud in the sky and a gentle breeze that kept the boats moving and a flat Lake Erie.

Walt Norris was first around Buffalo heading back to Erie. Sunday evening the winds again lightened and shifted back SE but they never died and everyone continued to make progress. There was another almost scary Moonrise as a big orange ball came out of the lake. The freighter lanes were quite busy and made for a good test of the AIS systems on many boats. The fleet was in a couple of tight groups and as Walt finished the rest of the fleet started rounding Buffalo.



Monday the winds freshened a little. The early boats to round the Seneca Shoal buoy enjoyed an offshore breeze overnight. Dave Evans, Dan Pavalat, John Lubimir, Adrian Van Den Hoven and Bert Barrett worked their way back to Erie for afternoon and evening finishes. The winds slowly went SW during the day and the boats further back were looking at a 60 mile beat to Erie. With wind and waves not in sync progress was slow. On Nicknack I tried to hug the shore for more favorable winds and less slop and most of the fleet had the same idea.



As night fell everyone bet on an offshore breeze developing and it slowly did. I found myself at times in 10-12 knots of breeze only to have it die completely for an hour. Then it would come back up to 10-12 knots for another hour again only to die. This went on all night as Bill Tucker, David Amatangelo, Greg Gorny, Brad Enterline, Blair Arden and Wally McMinn finished overnight. By dawn the winds were about gone. Nicknack was lucky to keep up 2 knots of boat speed to the finish and first timers Alan Belavarac and Paul Baumann were finding out why we call them challenges as the winds never filled in. Both persevered to finally drift across the Erie finish line.

Erie Yacht Club was again the perfect host for the finish. The Tuesday evening dinner get together was again a great time to wind down together.



The 2011 Lake Erie Challenge will start August 20th at North Cape so make plans now to sail.

Lake Erie First Timer

From Allan Belovarac

Preparation is the key to a successful voyage. I started thinking about the Lake Erie Challenge a year in advance and read up all I could on safely sailing a boat solo. I also carefully went over the required items for safety the GLSS requires. I found that I had a good deal already, but had to make an investment in others, such as the SOLAS flares, handheld radio, jacklines, etc. What I did was little by little acquire the items and spread the pain over a number of months so I didn't have to make a big splurge all at once.



It's also a good idea to see if there are folks in your area interested in doing the challenge or who have already done one and meeting occasionally to talk about equipment, apprehensions, what it was (or

will be) like, concerns of loved ones, etc. Here in Erie, Greg Gorny organized a group of veterans and newbies and we shared our experiences, concerns, etc over a few beers every now and then and through emails. He also organized a hundred mile qualifier for those who were thinking about doing the Challenge. For myself, it was a rewarding experience – I don't know if I would have done it myself if I didn't have a bunch of guys encouraging me along the way.

One thing that really impressed me once I arrived at North Cape for the Lake Erie start was the spirit of camaraderie and willingness to help that all the participants shared with one another and how the new folks were welcomed into the group. I met some really interesting and great people and I hope to renew those acquaintances every year and make new ones in the future.



Once the challenge starts, new participants should realize that as the fleet spreads out along the way, they may find themselves “alone,” and out of view of other competitors. That's what solo sailing is all about, of course. Still, I had the sense of a being part of a group as our scheduled radio comms were reassuring in the sense that I realized I was not completely alone and if I had any concerns or questions there would always be someone a click of the handset away.

Lastly, the experience of being on my boat for several days nonstop was truly exhilarating! I got into a daily routine of safety checks, radio comms, meal preparation, sail changes/sets,

maintenance, etc that surprised me in that I was really busy! The sunsets, moonrises, and watching the stars at night without any interfering lights from civilization was almost spiritual. I realize I was lucky in that the weather was ideal for this year's Lake Erie Challenge, but I'm sure if it was less than that I'd be telling sea stories about how exhilarating it was to handle all that Mother Nature dished out.

2011 Solo Challenges -

***Scheduled/~ To be Scheduled:**

June 18, 2011

- * **33rd Port Huron to Mackinac**
- * **15th Chicago to Mackinac**
- * **3rd Super Mac (514-Nm)**
- * **2nd Super Mac and Back (1034-Nm)**

July 16, 2011

- * **3rd Lake Ontario Solo Challenge**

August 6, 2011

- * **4th Tran-Superior**
 - ~ **4th Lake Erie**
 - ~ **Lake Superior - Solo Scramble**
 - ~ **Lake Michigan - Kings Cup**

September

- ~ **Lower Lake Huron-Solo**
- ~ **Lake Michigan-Solo Scramble**
- ~ **St. Clair Solo & Big Al's Steak Roast**



Kings Cup – Lake Michigan Inaugural Regatta puts GLSS Members to the Test....by Dirk Kruger

The inaugural King's Cup regatta was great! It was held August 13 and went from St. Joseph, MI to Chicago and back. The course distance was 111 NM. Many of the participants complimented the event, yacht club, course, and conditions. The regatta had tough competition in the dual handed and solo divisions.

The race as told by Sea Raider:

The winds were light at the start and built to 10 knots by the time the fleet was 15 miles from Chicago. This was where the race became more interesting since a couple of storm fronts were forecasted to come through in a fast and furious way. The chatter on the VHF over the weather was consistent for about an hour before the first front arrived



RipTide 31 miles from the first Race Course Mark of the Kings Cup Regatta

Sea Raider was at the head of the fleet and first into the front. The plan was to reef the main when the wind started picking up and then roll up the head sail (#2) when the winds got stronger. The wind went from 15 to 30 knots in about 20 seconds, along with a 180 degree wind shift. This was a little too quick for Sea Raider, sailed solo, to efficiently reduce sail on a well canvassed 36 foot boat. As you can imagine all heck broke loose in an instant. The main was reefed first which seemed like it took forever but was actually about a minute. Both reefing lines needed to be hauled in on winches. The boat spun 180 degrees. The sheets of the head sail were let loose and the furling line could only be pulled in through the winch. By the time it was in, about 2 minutes, the sheets created a knot never before seen or heard of. They were knotted up about the size of a small duffle bag! During all of the sail shortening the boat went through at least two 360's. Apparently it looked pretty bad since Renaissance, which was closing in fast on Sea Raider, radioed over to see if Sea Raider still had crew. A massive downpour of rain came down for about 5 minutes. What a joke. The boat was then put back on course and making 7 knots with reefed main alone. Looking back at other competitors it was obvious that Sea Raider was not alone with boat direction issues. It was either Geronimo (dual handed) or Renaissance (solo) that was also going in circles. This was a bit comical and humbling to witness all at the same time. After about 30 minutes the winds stabilized and came out of the SSW at about 14 knots. New sheets were made on the head sail and the old ones tossed into storage.

The next front was forecasted to be moving at 60 knots towards us, very violent, and was about 400 miles long, stretching the length of Illinois and into Wisconsin, and guaranteed to hit us in about 3 hours. The first front was just a "trainer" for the "real" one coming. The game plan on Sea Raider was to simply take all of the sails down and go adrift until it passed. The problem with that plan was that Sea Raider would be near the first turning mark which was about 2 miles offshore of the city. Thoughts of how difficult/challenging it would be to deploy the anchor if necessary went through sailors minds.

The fleet continued on towards the city which was beautiful in the evening lights. We kept a watchful eye out on the approaching front. Rounding the first mark and heading south to the second mark was uneventful. Sea Raider led Renaissance by about 3/8 mile. Geronimo was about another 1/2 mile

behind. The air was very warm and the winds were SW at 15 knots. Many of the competitors commented on the radio of how beautiful the city was.

Knowing the competitive nature of Renaissance which also has the same rating of Sea Raider, Sea Raider was in no way going to give Renaissance an opportunity to pass. Geronimo, in another division (dual handed) that started 5 minutes after the solo division, owes Sea Raider 3 sec/mile, which equates to 5 minutes, 33 seconds was essentially making this a scratch race for the front runners. Going upwind on the second leg, Renaissance closed the gap on Sea Raider to about 600 feet. After hearing that the next front was about 100 miles out Sea Raider decided to fly the chute after rounding the 4 mile crib and then gipping over to Starboard when rounding the third mark on the course. We could see the lightening of the next front behind the city. Things were getting exciting and anxious. At 2 AM and about .7 mile from the Wilson Ave crib, the wind shifted violently, broaching Sea Raider and knocking it 60 degrees off course. The chute came down and by the time all was said and done Renaissance was back to about 600 feet behind Sea Raider. After a quick repacking of the chute, Sea Raider launched the chute again, after rounding the last turning mark at Chicago.

The winds went from 15 to 20 knots after about an hour heading east. Sea Raider was flying and the skipper's hands were becoming numb from grabbing the wheel so hard. The winds built to 23 knots. Sea Raider's spinnaker was only good for 25. The boat was steadily at 9.3 to 10 knots, hit a surf at 12.1 knots, yeehaaa. Sea Raider was ripping along making distance on the competitors (presumably). Sailing in a t-shirt and shorts at 4 AM on Lake Michigan. Sailing just couldn't get any better. Sea Raider's skipper was exhausted, hadn't slept or for that matter hardly even sat down in the race. At this point Sea Raider was 15 hours into the race, the solo skipper's shoulders and feet were aching, but the adrenalin was flowing. Adrenalin is a wonderful, powerful thing.

Sea Raider was praying and hoping that the winds did not increase past 25 knots since taking down the chute in those conditions and bodily state was not going to be pretty. A game plan was created that seemed to make sense if a take down was required. The winds dropped to 15 and then back in the 20's for another hour before dropping off for the remainder of the race. At sunrise it was discovered that Renaissance was back about 4-6 miles. Geronimo was not seen. Being a sport boat it may have passed Sea Raider unnoticed. The second, nasty front dissipated by the time it got to the lake.

At the 8 AM call in, Sea Raider's position and estimates were confirmed.



After falling through the foredeck hatch for the final spinnaker take down, a first, Sea Raider finished at 9:55:40 AM Saturday. The fleet docked in St. Joe either at the yacht club or immediately behind in West Basin Marina. They got cleaned up and enjoyed an evening of camaraderie, island music, and food at the waters edge of St. Joseph River Yacht Club. Flags were awarded to all first, second, and third place finishers with the following results: Solo Section – 1st Sea Raider, 2nd Renaissance, 3rd Zanjero; Dual Handed Section – 1st Loose Shoes, 2nd Geronimo.

For the racers that were there it is believed that the event was very much enjoyed. For those that missed it, well, they missed a good one!

From the crew of Sea Raider, I hope to see you all at the start line next year!

Dirk Kruger



Heading Home after the Kings Cup Regatta (another nice sail)

Aboard at a Ship's Helm

Walt Whitman (1819–1892).

ABOARD, at a ship's helm,
A young steersman, steering with care.

A bell through fog on a sea-coast dolefully ringing,
An ocean-bell—O a warning bell, rock'd by the waves.

O you give good notice indeed, you bell by the sea-reefs ringing,
Ringing, ringing, to warn the ship from its wreck-place.

For, as on the alert, O steersman, you mind the bell's admonition,
The bows turn,—the freighted ship, tacking, speeds away under her gray sails,
The beautiful and noble ship, with all her precious wealth, speeds away gaily and safe.

But O the ship, the immortal ship! O ship aboard the ship!
O ship of the body—ship of the soul—voyaging, voyaging, voyaging.

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