



The
**SOLO
CHALLENGER**



The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society

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Newsletter Editors: Tony Driza & Jo Buckingham

Winter 2007

**A NOTE FROM THE
PRESIDENT**

Greetings Fellow GLSS Members,

It is an honor and a pleasure to be able to serve as your President this year, with another outstanding Board of Directors. We welcome two new members to our Board this year, Jeff Urbina, who will be serving as your Vice President and Jo Buckingham, Corresponding Secretary. Filling out our slate of Officers are Mike Mahar as Treasurer, John Jacobs as Recording Secretary, Bill Smith as Events/Open House Chair, Matt Scharl as Safety Chair, Tony Driza in the Ship's Store and Webmaster and Paul Schloop, keeping us all in line as immediate Past President. I would like to take a moment and personally thank Paul for a job-well-done as President last year. As with Presidents before him, Paul steered our path toward a bigger and better GLSS with his efforts. Following the lead of the original organizers, our society is continuing to grow in membership and challenges, as we truly evolve as the **Great Lakes** Singlehanded Society.

Our job this year as your Board, is to continue to improve our society and grow our membership. This year the fruit of last year's planning pay off with the inaugural Lake Erie Challenge. Wally McMinn, Tom Munson and their team have put together a great membership granting challenge on Lake Erie in August, our fourth Great Lake. I guess that leaves Ontario to level our sights on! In the meantime don't forget our feeder races, one of which meets the requirements as a Qualifier race, the rest are just plain fun. The calendar is in this issue and on

the website. Speaking of calendars, please look for the Open House near you and lend your expertise and support to our fellow member presenters. These are great recruitment venues for our organization as well as a service to all sailors, in promoting safe, shorthanded sailing.

Lastly, if you have paid your dues this year, a big thank you! If you haven't gotten to it yet, please do. As our society grows, so does the cost of keeping everyone informed, not to mention the ancillary expenses involved in the events we hold or participate in, to boost the interest in our organization.

Pick an event to attend. Pick a challenge or two and most of all bring a new member aboard. We as an organization have more to offer than ever for singlehanded sailors. Looking forward to another productive year!

Robert R. Robins
President GLSS

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Recapping the 2007 AGM

The thermometer and exposed skin verified in no uncertain terms that winter had returned with a vengeance, but that didn't put a damper on the 2007 AGM held in Chicago at Maggiano's Little Italy Restaurant on Saturday, February 3rd. The turnout was easily one of the highest in recent years, with approximately 100 members and guests RSVP-ing for the event, and very few no-shows. The ballroom was packed!

President Paul Schloop presided over the General meeting, which was conducted with very little fuss or fanfare. Wally McMinn gave a thorough presentation on the proposed Lake Erie Solo Challenge. Some lively discussion ensued, with all parties given the opportunity to voice their opinions on the proposed membership granting challenge, and the subsequent constitutional amendment. A three fourths majority of those in attendance was necessary for the amendment to be approved, and it passed with a nearly unanimous vote by the membership. The highlight of the evening came as



member Dick Lappin was presented an award, constructed by President Paul Schloop, recognizing Dick as the only GLSS member who

Dick Lappin (l) and Paul Schloop Photo by T. Driza

has successfully completed **25 Solo Challenges!** Dick has accumulated so many medallions over the years that Paul felt it appropriate to come up with a suitable storage device for them – a beautifully engraved wooden display box. Congratulations Dick!

Once again, thanks to the efforts of Jim McLaren and Paul Schloop, a fabulous Italian dinner was served tableside, which had been preceded by a self-serve appetizer bar – needless to say, there is no way anyone could have left that night still feeling hungry. Dinner was followed by the evening's entertainment – a one hour concert featuring the balladeer of the Great Lakes, **Lee Murdock**. Not



Lee Murdock Photo by T. Driza

only is his guitar playing and singing first rate, but the stories behind the songs really tied it all together.

The scheduled agenda concluded with the door prize raffles which included items donated by Derek Hatfield's Spirit of Canada campaign, Eldean's in Holland, and the GLSS parted with a few bottles of Mt. Gay rum. Jo Buckingham and Mike Mahar had spent much of the early portion of the evening cajoling the attendees into purchasing tickets to the 50/50 raffle, very nearly selling an entire roll of tickets. When all was said and done, a grand total of over \$800 was realized, and newly elected Director Jeff Urbina was the lucky winner of half of the amount. A big round of thanks to Jo and Mike for their efforts, and congratulations to Jeff on his new-found wealth!

Many of the attendees weren't ready to give up the party mode, and they adjourned across the street to the Irish pub to pick up where they had left off. An Irish band, New Element, was really heating it up- the place was packed and jumping; it was an excellent conclusion to a very successful AGM!



2007 Board of Directors

The 2007 Board of Directors is in place following the election at the Annual General Membership Meeting held at Maggiano's in Chicago. Newly elected Directors Jocelyn Buckingham and Jeff Urbina join re-elected Director Rob Robins, bringing the total Board back to full strength at nine Directors. The Board would like to thank Blair Arden for his service and contributions during his three year term, and also wish to thank Bill Dembek for volunteering to run for one of the Director positions. Whether or not a member is elected to the Board is less important than volunteering to be a part of the process – without that spirit, the organization would be pretty much becalmed!

It's shaping up to be a watershed year for the Society with the running of **four** membership granting Challenges! The Board will be busy pulling it all together, of that there is little doubt!



Still a bargain – 2007 Member dues remain unchanged at \$30. Use PayPal on the web – cash and checks are always cheerfully accepted too!

The 2007 Solo Mackinac Challenges *Under 100 days and counting...*

Yee Ha! Less than 100 days away from the gun, and the *C-Spray*, *Novation*, nor the *Bijou* are in the water yet, let alone the harbor and the mouth of the St. Clair River free of ice. This seems so foreign compared to what other solo sailors are doing with their boats at this critical time point; sailing.

So what to do?

First: find a towel to catch the drool as you peruse through the hardware catalogs, sail makers websites and of course that Wally boat brochure you ordered and received a couple years ago, just in case those options finally came to fruition.

Second: As you are budgeting for this years additions don't forget to download the GLSS required equipment list. As overwhelming as it may seem at first, it has a wonderful ability to remind you of other items you discovered during last years race you wanted to do adjust this year.

Third and most important: While comparing that over the top wish list to the reality of the 2007 budget. And contemplating whether to enter or not because the #1 is not as fast as she should be and the mainsail is so soft you could use her as a spare sheet on the guest bed. Do not forget that ours is a CHALLENGE not a race. Oh sure we are all very competitive and maybe no more so than with one another. However it is about the personal bliss of the completion of this challenge that is the eye of the prize!

Having said that, I just realized I too have lost sight of the original initiatives of the GLSS. Upon completion of my first challenge, only with the encouragement of my fellow sailors I felt finishing was a given. Going forward I immediately began focusing on moving up the flag color ladder. Not considering the ease of the challenges I have completed.

Yes that's right the ease of the last 5 challenge's. Oh we all talk a big game about how we would rather have heavy weather than sit out in the lake for 2 days going backwards. Would we really? The last Huron Mac challenge that had truly heavy weather 2 people died and numerous others took to harbors for safe refuge.

So while we all nickel and dime the GLSS Required Equipment List, it is there for a very good reason. To those of us that are intent on running ring shots on ratings, know that ratings don't matter in a 50k blow and no, not because we are "All at hull speed." And

know that you can still get a red flag after sailing south bare headed for an hour or more hanging out with an injured challenger.

Can't wait to see everyone at the harbor safe and sound,

jo



Setting the Goderich Mark By Dave Kew (Past Commodore, Goderich YC)

Early June of 2006, two members from the Goderich Yacht Club who had been setting the Goderich race mark for a number of years (on behalf of the GLSS and DSA), called me and asked if I would do the honors this year. I agreed without hesitation, after all, how big a deal could it be? I imagined I would do this either by myself or ask for someone to assist. In fact one of the guys who had done it before offered to come out with me and show me the ropes. When I asked them what was involved, they said I would need three guys. The mark would need blowing up at the dock before being towed out. They also told me that the mark was in Port Huron and would be sent up to us before the race, and in fact maybe even a new one that would include strobe lights and batteries, etc. I thought great! This will be easier than I thought.

Well, time went on and there was no sign of the mark. The week of the race arrived and still no mark, despite the assurances it would be here. Mid week the weather was starting to look dicey for the rest of the week and we missed the opportunity to go out and set the mark in fair conditions. By Thursday I was getting really worried. My level of anxiety must have had an impact on those handing the job over to me, since after a few more frantic phone calls, guess what? It turns out that the mark had been in Goderich all this time in someone's garage. I finally get my hands on this mark on Friday evening, just about the time the skippers meetings are in progress back in Sarnia and Port Huron. It turns out to be the "old mark" – no sign of the supposed new one. To blow it up I am given an old vacuum cleaner with the hose held on with duct tape. This may turn out to be more of a challenge than I thought!

Saturday morning arrives. The person who had volunteered to show me the ropes can't make it because of some emergency, so I am down to me and my wife and a friend we had arranged to take out for his very first sail after the "ten minute job" of setting the mark. I take the mark down to the dock

and we blow it up and tie the lights into the pockets. The mark is then put on the bow of my CS34 sailboat because it is blowing too hard to tow it out. Approaching the Lake from the Maitland River, our friend observes that the Lake is "quite choppy". Not having been out sailing before he wasn't sure "how rough was rough"!! He related later, that he didn't want to appear to be a wimp, but knew that this was "not good" and was having to keep focused on the horizon to avoid the on- set of seasickness.

In my "briefing", I was told all I had to do was to find the lat and long, tie the anchor to the bottom ring and a small kedge consisting of a bucket full of nails to a corner, to keep it upright, and then chuck it overboard and let it go. Sounds easy!! We got out there and it was blowing 20 knots with 5-foot waves, and we were struggling to hold the marker on the bow. At one point I was lying flat on my back with the marker on top of me as I fastened the anchor rode. Our friend had the "not so easy job" of reading out the coordinates from the GPS while trying to keep his breakfast down. I finally got the mark off the side of the boat only to have it bouncing all over the place and then it went upside down and all the lights fell out of the pockets, but are still tied on. We were struggling to get the mark upright while it continued to bounce off the boat. We circled around making 2 or 3 attempts to try and find a way to come up to the mark in the right position. We finally got it upright but one of the lights came adrift while putting them back in the pockets. We now had to practice our man overboard technique in an attempt to retrieve the light. I finished up over the back of the boat on my swim ladder trying to catch the light as we circled around. After several unsuccessful attempts, I finally just jumped into the water and grabbed it. We then had to circle around again to come up along side the mark and place the light back into the pocket which we just couldn't do. So it was left with 2 out of 3 lights for the racers and while not at the exact coordinates it was reasonably close and I was soaking wet! What I envisioned as a simple job turned into a nightmare, everything that could go wrong did go wrong and it was all happening as the race was in progress, ever pressing towards the (infamous) Goderich mark. Fortunately I heard that most boats had no problem finding the mark. We had a nice sail back to the marina, which our friend thoroughly enjoyed and after a few beers back at the dock it all seemed worthwhile, having "survived" the setting of the Goderich Mark

The next morning I went down to the marina to look out and check on the mark but I couldn't see it at all. I thought it must be half-way to Michigan. However, I went out in the boat and found it close to where it should be, Thank God! On Wednesday I

went back out with 3 buddies to retrieve it and had no problem. It now is in the safe hands of this year's new Commodore until next season.

Our friend is looking forward to his next sail; he says "perhaps a more leisurely sail...minus the marker setting".

Next time you round the Goderich Mark, throw a beer for those who set it!

Calling Out to the Alumni

Remember the feeling you had in your heart and soul upon completing the challenge? Something substantial enough that you decided to form a "Society." So here we are 25+ years later and where are you? We need you! We need you to participate in the challenges, we need you to volunteer for the various race committees, we need you to sell advertisements in our challenge book, we need you to volunteer to take Lat/Longs for the Tracker. Have you taken a look lately at what your "Society" is up to? It is hot and vibrant as ever and ***needs your participation now more than ever.*** Please call me at (313) 516-4411 or email Jocelyn.buckingham@sbcglobal.net. With your vibrant ideas, and your volunteer spirit, you can really help "sell" the challenge program. Only with your participation can we progress, and grow the Society!



The GLSS Open Houses

With spring just around the corner, it's time to give a thought or two to the annual GLSS Open Houses that are held in Detroit and Chicago. They present a great opportunity to introduce a prospective skipper to the world of solo sailing, be it a first time Mac Challenge, or the St. Clair Solo.

Open House Chairman Bill Smith has recruited the capable talents of Tom Munson for yet another year, and Tom is joined by Director Mike Mahar – they have secured the date of March 28, 2007 and the venue once again will be the Great Lakes Yacht Club. The agenda will begin promptly at 7:00 PM, and woe to the presenter who runs long with Tom standing by with the ever-present boat hook to keep the pace of the meeting on schedule!

In Chicago, the GLSS will be holding the Open House at the venerable Chicago Yacht Club, thanks to the efforts of past President Paul Schloop and Chicago Yacht Club member Arch Van Meter. Of

note, Arch will be making his inaugural GLSS participation in the upcoming Chicago to Mackinac Island Solo Challenge on June 23. Thanks Arch for working with the Chicago Yacht Club to secure the venue for the evening!



North Cape Yacht Club Sailing School Singlehanded Seminar

Now that there is a membership granting solo challenge on Lake Erie (August 25, 2007), it only seemed like a natural progression to offer those prospective skippers in the region the opportunity to attend a seminar on **Applying Basic Seamanship Skills to Singlehanded Sailing**. Lake Erie Solo Challenge Co-Chair Wally McMinn has put together an informative agenda for the evening, co-sponsored by the North Cape Yacht Club Sailing School.



The event will take place on April 4, 2007 at the North Cape Yacht Club, 11850 Toledo Beach Road, LaSalle, MI. The phone for NCYC is (734) 242-5081. For additional details

concerning the agenda, please check out the flyer posted on the GLSS website:

<http://www.solosailor.org/pdfs/lesc.pdf>

North Cape Yacht Club has been actively holding regattas for many years, and in addition to hosting the Lake Erie Solo Challenge, NCYC will host the Catalina 22 Nationals July 21-27. North Cape is also home to GLSS members Bob Pollock, who is an NCYC Board member, and Gary Hall, who successfully completed a Super Mac in 1987.



The Newsletter Has an Additional Editor!

The new year brings a most welcome addition to the **Solo Challenger** in the form of **Jo Buckingham**, who has graciously accepted the invitation to lend a hand in putting out the quarterly newsletter. While the Society has grown over the past few years, you've still had to put up with your same old editor – the new tag team format should help to breathe some fresh air into the publication. Jo is also the

new Corresponding & Email Secretary, so over the next year, you'll be hearing quite a bit from her.

If you have any articles that you'd like to have published in an upcoming issue of the **Solo Challenger**, or if you have a picture that would dress up the publication, please feel free to send them to either Jo or myself:

jocelyn.buckingham@sbcglobal.net
tdriza@wmis.net

If you do send in an article, please send it using Word. We may have to edit it a bit to fit the confines of the newsletter – if it's an image you're sending, please reduce the file size to that appropriate for posting on the web, or emailing (in other words, a small file will do just fine). Your editors look forward to an interesting year, and we look forward to a great many submissions for the next three newsletters.

The deadline for any submissions for the next **Solo Challenger** will be **May 25, 2007**.



The 2007 Trans Superior Sault Ste. Marie to Duluth Singlehanded Challenge

Now there's a mouthful if ever there was one! It's only fitting that the name matches in length one of our membership granting challenges. All systems are go for the second Trans Superior Solo, to be held this year on August 4, 2007. The GLSS will again be competing in a Singlehanded Division within the fully crewed Trans Superior Yacht Race and interest is strong this year with the first two entrants filing their applications in **February!** These are also first-time participants in one of our Challenges, so it's a great indication of the number of new members we might expect to welcome this year overall.

New for 2007 will be the use of transponders to track all boats during the Challenge, be they crewed or singlehanded. The tracking is provided by FIS, and will make viewing the race on the internet an exciting experience for those who cannot compete. The crewed entries will not have to make routine position reports, but even with the transponder, we have decided to stick with the same call-in schedule as we used in the 2005 event as an additional safety feature.

For those that haven't experienced the sailing in Superior, it is truly unlike anything in the lower lakes. Our finishing city, Duluth, is an excellent venue to host the event, with a wide variety of attractions, dining and entertainment to make the trip worthwhile. BluesFest will be in progress when the fleet is in town, and free mooring in Slip #2 directly across from BluesFest will provide a ringside seat (they don't play too late at night either...).

For an application and all the other details on the event, please refer to the GLSS website:

<http://www.solosailor.org/transup.php>

Come north this year; join us on the starting line near the Gros Cap light at the entrance to the St. Mary's River! Then enjoy a bit of cruising in the unspoiled wilderness that makes Lake Superior a real gem in the Great Lakes – you'll really be glad you made the trip up!



The Online Ship's Store is Open

The Online Ship's Store has opened the doors and is now ready to provide you with an easy way to pick up new or replacement GLSS items and articles of clothing. Items such as replacement GLSS burgees, medallions, blazer patches, decals, and GLSS caps are available for immediate shipping – polo shirts available in three different colors with two embroidery options, a three-season jacket, and an all-weather parka are available for pre-ordering by following the instructions on the GLSS website:

<http://www.solosailor.org/shipsstore.php>

For your convenience, PayPal is accepted and is the preferred payment option, as we can print shipping labels directly from the PayPal site – it also makes giving a refund easier in the event an item has to be returned. It doesn't cost you anything either!

GLSS embroidered items help spread the word about the premier singlehanded sailing organization – we didn't cut corners on the quality of the items, and you'll be happy with the purchase. The slight profit generated from the items will help the GLSS with future projects, such as race tracking – it is truly a win-win for both you and the Society!



Lake Erie Solo Challenge

With the passage of the constitutional amendment that allows for membership to be granted to those solo skippers who successfully complete the Lake Erie Solo Challenge, the GLSS will have membership-granting challenges on four of the five Great Lakes!

Co-chairs Wally McMinn and Tom Munson have worked through the myriad of details necessary to pull off an event of this magnitude, and the Notice of Race, Entry Form, and the rest of the required documents are posted on the GLSS website:

<http://www.solosailor.org/eriesolo.php>

You may download the associated PDF files and save them to your computer, or simply print them out directly from your web browser.

Like any of the Challenges, this one will find a way to sneak up on you, so while the boat prepping is slow, take the time to complete your entry, and mail it in to Wally at the address listed on the entry form. Two of the friendliest Yacht Clubs on the Great Lakes will be hosting the respective Start and Finish: North Cape Yacht Club will offer dockage, provide for the Skipper's Meeting, and host the start; the Erie Yacht Club will host the finish, and provide slips and the facility for the post-race festivities.

Make plans now to acquire one of the inaugural medallions – this is sure to generate a lot of interest, based on the initial response!



Upcoming Events

March 21, 2007	Open House Chicago
March 28, 2007	Open House Detroit
April 4, 2007	Solo Seminar NCCYC
June 23, 2007	Solo Mac Challenges
August 4, 2007	Trans-Superior Solo
August 25, 2007	Lake Erie Solo
Sept. 7, 2007	L. Michigan Scramble
September 8, 2007	Lower Huron Solo
September 29, 2007	St. Clair Solo & Big Al's Steak Roast

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

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