



GLSS Solo Challenger

The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes Singlehanded Society
April 2020 – Ken Verhaeren(verhaerk@aol.com) editor

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From The Helm

April 2020

Welcome to Spring 2020! It's been intermittently warm, cold, calm, windy, sunny, rainy and snowy - all in the last five days - and it's April. This is not necessarily unusual weather for this time of year around the Great Lakes, but



the current COVID-19 emergency and stay-at-home orders are making cabin fever worse than usual. As I write this, there is still hope that we will be able to run our Challenges on Lakes Michigan, Huron, Ontario and Erie this year, but this is far from certain. Rest assured that the GLSS Board of Directors is considering all the options and you should expect to see a regular flow of information in the coming weeks. Our options, though, will largely depend upon whether the hosting yacht clubs will be open come June, July and August. Perhaps with a few modifications to the starts and finishes and limitations on group gatherings, we can keep our Challenges on the calendar. After all, solo sailing is the ultimate in social distancing.

If you did not attend the AGM in Cleveland, you missed a great party and an even better speaker. Our speaker was none other than American Vendee Globe skipper and two-time finisher, Rich Wilson, who completed both the 2008/09 and 2016/17 editions primarily to provide content for the SitesAlive! K-12 educational program. Rich's presentation was spectacular. His enthusiasm and passion for the sport are palpable. His dedication to K-12 education is tireless. And his new endeavor, the Collegiate Offshore Sailing Circuit, is a bold step toward training American offshore sailors. Rich told us that he had never given his presentation to a group of singlehanded sailors before; and I think that he may have enjoyed telling his stories to a uniquely-interested audience as much as we enjoyed hearing them. Thanks to all who attended the AGM and made it a memorable event for all of us.

Next, I'd like to thank Joey Baker for his leadership as GLSS President this past year. He has been an excellent source of information for me as I take his place and I'm sure glad that he is still on the Board and that he is still our Webmaster. I'd also like to thank past president Rick Stage for his service as a director these past few years and to welcome Kris Kimmons as the newest member of our Board of Directors. If any of you reading this newsletter have an interest in becoming a board member, please let us know, as the GLSS depends upon its volunteers to keep the cogs turning.

In these uncertain and challenging times, I hope that you will be able to enjoy your boats this season and that you can do so safely. Be well, be mindful and be happy!

Best regards,
Rob Burger
GLSS President

Annual General Membership Meeting

The 2020 AGM was an outstanding event hosted by our new President Rob Burger. It also marked our 1st AGM in Cleveland. We have come a long way since the GLSS was first thought about, first Solo Challenge and first Annual General meeting (AGM). The plaque shown here is dedicated to the Charter Members of the GLSS. Daniel Bare, Robert Branch II, James Douglas, Gregory Dunn, Ralph Eilberg, Charles Eno, John Herbert, Ray Jacobs, Dave Jones, Fred Lindow, Bob Meyers, Geran Miller, Jerry Murphy, Michael Richmond, Larry Rotta, Dennis Turner and Joe Vallee.

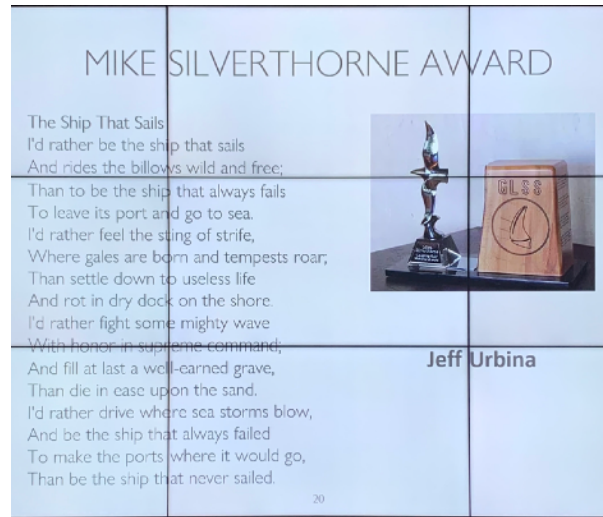
The GLSS arranged for a block of room at the Marriott in the Keystone Center. This was a great location in downtown Cleveland and also the site of the AGM. Many of the participants arrived Friday afternoon, got into their rooms and then headed down to the lobby. It was

fun watching friends greeting each other as more and more members arrived with their guest.



The meeting started with registration and the social hours. An open bar was provided, so the tall tales really flowed, but the business meeting was quickly

started for the betterment of the society. An excellent dinner was served and then awards presented. Jeff Urban was presented the MIKE SILVERTHORNE Award. This award is presented to someone who reflects the exemplary spirit of Mike and dedication to others. It is only awarded when the past recipients feel a candidate merits it. This year honoree truly meets those requirements. Jeff efforts for the GLSS have significantly assisted those around him.



The GLSS

Board of Directors presented our FOUNDERS Award to Paul Nickerson. Paul (standing on the left) was presented the award by Jeff Neuhalfen (former president). This award is presented to someone who has worked to help the GLSS in a variety of ways and sailing is not part of the criteria. Paul has run the Lake Erie Challenge for years, keep detailed statistics on all of our events and assisted hundreds of our members and non members to be better sails. The GLSS is a better organization because of people like Paul!

Rich Wilson Entertains at AGM



Rich Wilson was the guest presenter at the AGM. Rich came early and enjoyed not only the social hour but also dinner prior to his presentation. As personable as ever, he seemed to enjoy being with other solo sailors even if our seas were smaller than his. Rich's presentation was as enjoyable as it was educational. Spending some time on the past accomplishments, he spent ore time discussing plans for the future. Dreams of new adventures related to our own dreams. After he he was done, Rich moved around the tables meeting those in attendance. Dave Rearick spent some time with Rich talking about their experiences in the southern ocean. It was great fun for those close enough to listen in. At times both just smiled at some of the questions as they shared their experiences. Rich certainly enriched this truly exceptional AGM. For those of you who were unfortunate and not able to attend, there is next year.



CORONAVIRUS **(Covid 19)** **Slows Great Lakes Sailing**

What is there to be said? As this issue is being put together there are more questions than answers for what this means to sailing on the lakes. At this point Canada has cancelled some early events on Lake Ontario. The Lake Ontario Solo could be affected but as of right now no decision has been made. Since the Solo Mac is in June, it could be effected. Though we certainly meet the distanc-

ing requirement recommend by some and required by others, our boats might not be in the water on the start date. And to add to the confusion there is now talk of slowly removing some of the restrictions. Of course this is state by state in the US. So we could have some of are sailing grounds open while others are closed. Boat/US has a section on their site dedicated to marinas and what is open and closed.

Lake Levels

So lets say everything is over and good May 15th, now we have to get our boats in the water. Over the past year water levels on the great lakes have been reaching record levels. Some marinas have already announced that they are closed for the season in order to repair docks. Hazards that could be seen last year are now underwater.

So what is my plan? I will be sending in my entrance fee and hope for the best. The Board of Directors are monitoring the situation and will make the best possible decision for our sailors and organization. And I will be sailing as soon as possible! And if that is not possible, I'll sit on my boat in the boatyard smiling and remembering my friends and great sailing with the GLSS. I might even have a glass of wine.

Upcoming Events

- 07/11/2020 – [Lake Ontario Solo Challenge](#)
- 08/15/2020 [Lake Erie Solo Challenge](#)
- 08/00/2020 – [Lake Michigan Solo Scramble](#)
- 06/20/2020 – [Mackinac Solo Challenges](#)
- 09/00/2020 – [Lower Lake Huron Solo Challenge](#)
- 09/00/2020 – [St Clair Solo Challenge](#)

REMEMBER - Each one of the Challenges will be tracked for your enjoyment. You will find the tracking information on the GLSS site



Great Lakes Singlehanded Society

Greetings,

This is a reminder that registration for the 2020 GLSS Chicago to Mackinac Island and Port Huron to Mackinac Island Challenges, as well as for the Super Mac and Super Mac and Back, are open.

[Register Now!](#)

Given the uncertainty of hosting events such as these in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the GLSS will provide a full refund of registration fees paid by entrants if it becomes necessary to cancel these events this year. An entrant who has paid a registration fee may, as an alternative to receiving a full refund, elect to have the registration fee applied to entry into the events to be hosted in 2021.

Safe Sailing,
GLSS Board of Directors

The following is an article by Bob Allenick I found in the Dogwatch newsletter from Good Old Boat.

Bob Allenick has held a 50 Ton USCG Masters License since 2013. He and Sheila both grew up sailing and have been sailing together on their own keel boats since 1986. Bob and Sheila left Cleveland in the summer of 2017. Learn more about their adventures at herdiamond.net.

Social Distancing Afloat



Ensnorced in the cocoon-like security and comfort of our home, a Freedom 38 sailboat named *Her Diamond*, I turn my attention away from the 24-hour coronavirus news cycle and I reflect. I am saddened by the suffering and fear that have overtaken our world. So far, my wife, Sheila, and I, and our friends and loved ones, have escaped the ravages of the COVID-19 virus. But like everyone else, we're weathering the storm at home, which happens to be aboard. I begin to wonder about the differences between sheltering on land and afloat in a slip.

Years ago, my youngest daughter gave me a nickname, Silver-Lining Bob. Today I'm drawn to finding a positive thread in the social isolation that we are enduring to avoid infection.

We move with the seasons, but we are currently at Burnt Store Marina, in Punta Gorda, Florida. We have good wifi and we're connected to power and water from ashore. We can take long showers and run our air conditioning (spring in southwest Florida is hot and humid).

Making new friends and then sharing sundowners in the cockpit is normally one of the most enjoyable parts of our life afloat. With physical distancing, this is off the table. We still converse with dock neighbors, but they're often sitting in their cockpit and we're standing 10 feet away on the dock. These brief encounters provide an opportunity to swap sea stories, but it's not nearly the same as a large cockpit gathering, sharing appetizers, enjoying potluck dinners, and playing board games.

Like our land-based neighbors, we are relying heavily on the internet to stay in touch with friends and family, and keeping up with the news. Like our land-based friends, we continue to take our daily 3-mile walks (around the marina), minding social-distancing mandates when passing folks on the sidewalk, something that's starting to feel oddly normal, though still unpleasant. We often wear our face masks and carry hand sanitizer with us, to use if we happen to touch a hand railing or marina restroom doorknob. So where is the silver lining? Because of the small size of our home and its relative isolation (there are only 3 other liveaboard boats on our dock), we feel a sense of security. We continue to enjoy sunsets and moon rises from the cockpit. [I continue to blow my conch at sunset, saluting the conclusion of another day.](#) When conditions are right, we dinghy out of the harbor to a sand bar or small island for a picnic, just the two of us. One to two times per week, we throw off the dock lines and head out onto Charlotte Harbor for a daysail. We've made occasional overnight outings, dropping the hook in secluded anchorages. Sheila still attends to art projects, but has also been sewing cloth face masks for friends and family. Manatees and dolphins continue to swim through the harbor, sometimes engaging us on a more intimate basis when we're in the dinghy. Finally, and this is no small thing, for the first time in 35 years, there is nothing haunting me from our boat repair to-do list. It's all done (though I am confident the list will begin anew). And maybe the real silver lining is that we do all of these small things more deliberately, with more awareness, appreciating them a bit more than normal, grateful for our continued health and good fortune. And those sun-downers? We've found a way to do them electronically. No, it's not the same.

