



The  
**SOLO  
CHALLENGER**

*The Official Newsletter of the Great Lakes  
Singlehanded Society  
Winter 2012*

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**Solo Challenger Editor Message**

The Annual General Meeting or AGM is less than a month away. In this Solo Challenger we provide information about the 3 solo sailors on the ballot for the GLSS Board of Directors. If you haven't signed up for the AGM you still can at the GLSS web site. You do not need to be a member to attend so bring your sailing buddies along.

This last summer Bert Barrett was the solo solo sailor to complete the Super Mac from the Chicago side. He tells his story below.

In the spring edition a GLSS quiz was included. The answers, at least my version of the answers are included below. If you don't agree come to the AGM and we can discuss your answers.

My thanks to all those who have contributed to the Solo Challenger over the last year. You have contributed some interesting and informative articles. We are always interested in your contributions so keep them coming in 2012!

See you at the AGM!

Bill Tucker, Corresponding Secretary

**2012 Solo Challenger Events**

- ❖ **January 21** Annual General Membership Meeting - Atheneum Suites Hotel Detroit
- ❖ **June 23** Port Huron to Mackinac Isl. Solo Challenge & Chicago to Mackinac Isl. Solo Challenge
- ❖ **July 21** Lake Ontario 300 Solo Challenge
- ❖ **August** 18 Erie Solo Challenge

**See the GLSS website at [www.solosailors.org](http://www.solosailors.org) for more details and entry forms.**

**Your help needed & appreciated!**  
**Send comments, pictures and articles to**

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## **2012 Prospective Board Members:**

### **Jon Jacobs**

Jon sails LOOSE SHOES, a 1984 C&C 35 Mk III, from his home port of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Jon did his first Solo Mac from Chicago in 2000 and won the President's Cup for his effort. He has completed 8 Solo Macs on Lake Michigan, one on Lake Huron and a Super Mac from Chicago in 2005. Jon is currently on the GLSS board, holds the position of Treasurer and is running for another term.



Here is how he responded to SC's questions:

How did you name your boat: Four owners, a preacher, a lawyer, a grant writer-business consultant and an obstetrician/gynecologist. Naming came down to LOOSE SHOES vs. Mystic Sperm. Go figure.

How did you learn to sail: As a 10 year old kid in Oklahoma where there is more shore line than in the state of Minnesota, I sailed dinghies till I was 30.

How did you get into single handed sailing: I started with double handed events on Lake Huron in the early to mid 80's on a J-24. I moved to Wisconsin in 1991 and bought my present boat in 1994 and with the help of Pat Nugent.

What GLSS jobs have you undertaken: Board member for two terms, Treasurer, Secretary, Vice President and President.

As a Board Member what are your primary areas of interest: Help the GLSS promote singlehanded challenges on all of the Great Lakes. Giving back to an organization that given me much pleasure and many new friends.

Any other comments of information about your sailing experience you wish to pass on: There are many aspects to keeping a quality organization healthy. I'm grateful for the many hours volunteers put into this organization and for the camaraderie of so many different personalities helping this organization work.

### **Mike Spence**

Mike sails VOYAGER, a big red C & C 44, 1986 with major upgrades and modifications performed in 2006 through 2009. His home port is Bayfield, Wisconsin. Mike did his first Solo Challenge in 2007 when he completed the Trans-Supreior. Mike has sailed in 3 Trans-Superior races and completed the Port Huron Super Mac and Back in 2011.



How did you name your boat: Voyager 1 was launched by NASA in 1977 to explore the solar system and interstellar space, and is the farthest man-made object from Earth.

How did you learn to sail: Received an invite to go sailing from a person at work, got hook so bad I went home and bought a 27 foot having only sailed 1 time. After that it was trial and error.

How did you get into single handed sailing: Encouraged by Eric Thomas and wanting to become more accomplished as a short-handed sailor.

What GLSS jobs have you undertaken: I have assisted in organizing the local Lake Superior Solo Scrambles in 2008 and 2011. This will be my first opportunity to contribute to GLSS directly and look forward to the challenges.

As a Board Member what are your primary areas of interest: Promotion of short-handed sailing on Lake Superior (both single and double handed, racing and cruising), showing how it can be done safely and what additional equipment and procedures will make it easier and more enjoyable. For those individuals who would like to compete, but feel they either do not have the type of boat or necessary "disposable income" to crewed race, GLSS offers a great alternative.

Any other comments of information about your sailing experience you wish to pass on: In June 2008 I started the Port Huron Super Mac and learned almost everything that could go wrong with a boat's autopilot and electronics, plus what I needed to do to overcome those challenges. Although I was forced or wisely decided to retire, I learned a lot about myself, my sailing abilities, my boat, and the Great Lakes. It really is about the journey and not the destination.

### **Ken Verhaeren**

Ken sails KISMET, a Nonsuch 30 out of Du Sable Chicago. Ken did his first Solo Challenge in 2005 when he completed the Chicago Mac. He has completed 5 Solo Macs from Chicago and in 2008 her completed the Super Mac and Back from Chicago.



How did you name your boat? After completing the sail of my 28' Islander and purchasing my Nonsuch 30 all within a month, my wife and I felt that it was KISMET. So after discussing other names we went right back to what brought us our new boat.

How did you learn to sail? Judy and I bought a 13' day sailor with the intent to eventually move up to a larger boat. I then signed up for Rainbow Fleet lessons with the Chicago Park District. As I sailed my Ghost, making all sorts of mistakes, I learned what I was doing wrong in those Rainbow classes. By the end of the summer the two came together and I could actually sail without scaring Judy too much. That was in the summer of 1980 and I still am trying to learn how to sail.

How did you get into single handed sailing? Maybe it was because the first time I took Judy out in that 13'er, I jibed and put her in the water under the sail while 7 months pregnant. Or it could have been from stories of all the storms my brother in law and I would get caught in. In any case Judy decided that I would sail across the lake and then she would join me in whatever harbor I showed up in. The truth of the matter is that when trying to sail with other people their schedules often create problems. I've only lost a few arguments when sailing solo.

What GLSS jobs have you undertaken? Like many members, I've spent time manning the GLSS booth in Chicago. That hardly was a job, more a pleasure meeting potential members along with those current members. This past year I assisted Rick McLaren with the SOLO Mac and am currently the Chairperson for the 2012 SOLO Mac.



As a Board Member what are your primary areas of interest? Having spent my life as an educator, my interest would revolve around spreading the word of the benefits of solo sailing. The safety seminars we do are tremendously important for all sailors.

### **Bert Barrett's Chicago to Port Huron Super Mac Race**

For me, the start of the Chicago Mackinac single-handed race seemed like the end of a long journey rather than the beginning. Getting my boat, a Sunfast 3200, "Upstart", from Toronto to Chicago and ready to race was actually no small undertaking.



When I left Toronto by air to embark on this adventure, I had two goals. The first was to finish the race and the second was to stay alive.

As promised, by the meteorologist who gave the weather briefing at the Skippers' Meeting the night before, there was no wind at the start and we literally drifted across the start line. I was lucky to be one of the first to float across and was able to unfurl my Code 0 and get some boat speed going albeit that it was in the wrong direction.

I am not a superstitious person but the day before the race on the way to the grocery store where I was about to buy provisions for ten days at sea, I stopped off at Nordstrom's and bought myself a pair of jeans that bore the "Lucky" brand. The night before the race, as I was

doing a final clean up on the boat, I found a penny on the sole near the base of the mast. I was about to pick the penny up and put it in my pocket with the rest of my small change when I decided to leave it there. What harm could a penny do on the sole of the boat near the base of the mast?

At the Skippers' meeting the night before, they provided a meal and we were divided into tables corresponding to each respective division. This allowed us to become acquainted with the skippers of the boats that we were racing against.

Jon Jacobs is a Lutheran minister from Milwaukee. He sails a C&C35 Mark III, named *Loose Shoes*. There was a 46' Beneteau "Strider" that I was racing against and I knew I would have no chance against him. Luke Brockman, who is in his mid 30's and looks like a gymnast, is a robotics engineer who bought an X-Yacht 102 that he tricked out to his liking and claimed that it was very, very fast in light air. All these single-handed sailors were low key, unpretentious and laid back but I knew that I was out of my league, for I was the most inexperienced sailor there and even more importantly most of these sailors had done this race several times. I was working my way up the fleet quite nicely with the Code 0. But I became worried that I was getting too far off course. So I furled the Code 0, unfurled the jib and started working my way back to the rhumb line. When we gave the first of our 6 hourly position reports I was encouraged to find that I was actually up there with the leaders. However, I knew it was early in the race and anything could happen.

My friend John, from Rochester, had introduced me to waterproof socks. He said you wear them over your regular socks and I found that it made my shoes feel a bit tight but it seemed like a good idea. I knew that the weather could dish up anything and that it may be hot in the middle of the day and so I wore shorts, prepared to strip down if necessary. Over my shorts I wore a pair of track pants and over those I wore a pair of Henry Lloyd Windbuster trousers and not trusting that they would be completely waterproof, over that I pair of rain pants. My upper body was similarly layered and although this worked very well, all the layers made trips to the head a bit of a challenge.

On the third day of the race, after I had passed Mackinac Island and was heading down Lake Huron, I was hit by a storm and I had to spend a fair amount of

time on the foredeck getting the storm jib up with the waves trying hard to wash overboard. It pounding rain and I became very, very wet. Once the boat was settled and sailing on course, I went below and took off all my clothes. When I got to the sock on my left foot it was completely drenched but ironically the one on the right foot was bone dry. So, I gave those waterproof socks a rating of 50%.



Another interesting item of clothing that I took along was a Sou'wester Hat that I had bought at a Skippers' Meeting for one of the LOSHRS races. This ridiculous looking hat is made of a kind of a vinyl material and has a very long brim down the back which prevents the water running down the back of one's neck. The front of the brim is turned up and it actually works very well at keeping the water off one's glasses. There is also a part that wraps around the back of your neck to keep your ears and your neck warm and a strap to stop the thing from flying away. The one thing that they didn't advertise at the Skippers' Meeting though was the fact when a raindrop hits that vinyl material being driven by a 30 knot wind it makes a kind of popping explosion. Multiply that by a million and it makes the brain feel like a bag of popcorn inside a microwave oven.

As evening fell on that first day, I sailed into the inevitable hole and the rest of the fleet caught up. Eventually, when it seemed like the wind was about to come up from behind and I got my spinnaker ready. This turned out to be the right move because in a failing light, I saw a GANGBUSTERS, a J105 coming towards me about to take my stern, flying his spinnaker making about 6 knots of boat speed. I was ready and as he came by my stern, I launched the chute and it opened with a satisfying "pop" which I hope impressed *Gangbusters*.

The acceleration felt great then it dawned on me that Gangbusters was on the other gybe heading towards the mark and I was going to have to gybe that spinnaker in the dark.

I refuse to document that debacle, and, needless to say, by the time I got the boat straightened out again after the gybe, I had given up more time.

As the night wore on, with the wind building, we approached the first bit of delicate navigating that we would have to do and I started to become a little apprehensive. The Manitou Passage lies between the Michigan mainland and the Manitou Islands. It is also a passage through which the freighters pass. The entry to the Passage is marked by a green light and that was all I could see in the pitch dark. The Upstart was screaming along on a beam reach making 7.5 knots and I was feeling somewhat out of control. I could see the light very clearly and it looked like it was about 100 meters away but when I checked on the chart plotter, it was actually three miles off. Everything was black. I could see no lights on land and I was not aware of any of the other boats navigation lights. I couldn't even see the waves.

My son, Steel had come to see me the night before I left for Chicago, and although we hadn't discussed racing, he turned at the door as he was leaving, looked me in the eye and said, "Dad, reef early!" With these words ringing in my head as I approached that green light, I decided to reef the main. That didn't slow the boat down though and I continued to plummet into the darkness at 7½ knots. So I partially furled the jib and slowed the boat down to 5½ knots giving up valuable much time. In the passage, the wind was "on the nose", and tacking back and forth trying to avoid the islands, shoals and freighters was tricky to say the least. When we gave our position reports that morning, I realized that I had given up ground and was probably not going to catch Strider the 46 ft Beneteau.

I am a person who makes a lot of mistakes and invariably have to do things twice because I mess them up the first time. In preparing for this race, In order to make my boat as safe as possible, I purchased a boom brake, installed an Espar heater, a carbon monoxide detector and a propane sniffer. But, best of all, I installed AIS.

AIS allows me to see commercial traffic on the screen of my chart plotter. I can tell their position, their heading and their speed. I can actually call them up on the radio and speak to the captain of the ship. More importantly though, those commercial vessels can see me and they know that I am a 32-foot sailboat called Upstart. With all this sophisticated electronic equipment come many, many alarms. My auto pilot has a wind shift

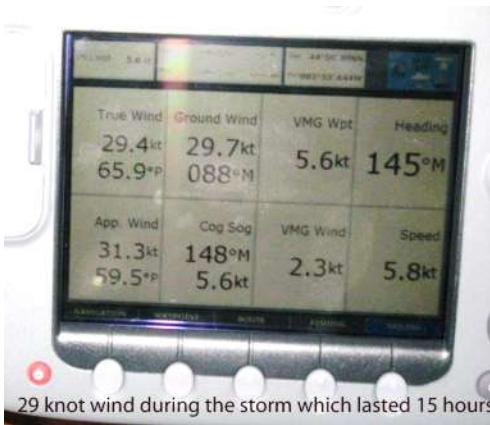
alarm and it has an off course alarm and an arrival alarm. I have an alarm clock which goes off every three hours to remind me to log my position. I have a watch commander that I can set to go off every 15 minutes so that I can wake up after a 15 minute nap to check the boat, my heading and scan the horizon before taking another 15 minute nap. There are so many alarms that often I hear alarms in my head when there isn't one. To me, the most important alarm is the "dangerous target" alarm on the AIS. This alarm will sound if a vessel equipped with AIS comes into my safety zone. During the storm, while I was going down Lake Huron, I was on the foredeck in heavy rain wrestling with the storm jib, when an alarm sounded. Obviously, I couldn't leave the foredeck to go and check the screen on the chart plotter but I went through the mental list and was certain that it had to be the "dangerous target" alarm. That meant that there was a freighter in my safety zone and, trying not to panic, I scanned the horizon. The visibility was less than 300 meters so that wasn't difficult. I saw no vessel whatsoever. But the alarm continued so I did a more careful scan and, as I looked behind my boat, I saw the "ghost ship from hell".



She was a small freighter and, unlike the normal ones that are black or a rusty brown, this vessel was a light grey and she was taking my stern about 50 meters from my boat. I'm sure the good captain had tried to call me on the radio. But I had been rather busy and I wouldn't have heard the radio over the popping of the raindrops of my Sou'wester Hat anyway. Having seen I was a sailboat, and knowing my course and speed he had been able to alter course enough to take my stern and put me out of danger. I sometimes wonder if he cut it fine just to scare me or whether that was the best he could do with limited manoeuvrability.

After the Manitou Passage, I worked relentlessly all day to try not to lose any more ground over my competitors. Gray's Reef is not a very complicated rounding but it would have been nice had I done it before. Once, I got around Gray's Reef, there was a 17 mile beat to the finish of the Chicago/Mackinac part of my race. I had a comfortable lead over the *Sorceress* and I was happy that I was going to finish ahead of her. However, just as the night was beginning to fall and I was approaching the Mackinac Bridge, I looked behind me and to my disgust I saw that magician, Luke Brockman in his red boat, the *Sorceress*, gaining on me with every tack. His father Noel Brockman, had been sailing his boat "Quick and Dirty" but *Quick and Dirty* had sustained a broken spreader which almost dismasted her and Luke's dad had been forced to abandon the race and motor to the finish where he was waiting for his son. Luke informed his dad that he was not far from the finish and he told him that, thanks to a favourable wind shift, he had almost caught the *Upstart*. But I know it wasn't a wind shift. The only reason he caught me is that he is a great sailor. After crossing the finish line and being acknowledged by the race committee I sailed into Lake Huron wondering where *Loose Shoes* could be. At the last position report, she had been about 40 miles behind me. I had come third in my division in that race and was over halfway to the finish of the Supermac. After more than 62 hours of non-stop racing, I pointed my boat into open water, set her on a course, and for the next five hours, took a series of 20minute naps, waking up every time the alarm went to check my heading and my course etc.. Somewhere down that lake, I checked my cell phone and found that Jon Jacobs on *Loose Shoes*, being out of radio contact, had left a voicemail. I called him back and he told me that he was taking such a pounding from the waves on Lake Huron that he really didn't think he could continue. The forecast was for the waves to build and there was a storm coming. This confirmed what my barometer was telling me. Shortly after hearing that Jon was retiring from the race, I was hit by back to back squalls. Surviving those squalls made me feel pretty good and I went down below to make lunch. No sooner had I made lunch than I suddenly started to get cold shivers down my spine because it dawned on me that those little squalls I had managed to weather were probably just a foretaste of things to come. I raced back up into the cockpit without touching my lunch and put the second reef back in the main.





29 knot wind during the storm which lasted 15 hours

I was reading wind speeds of 30 knots in the gusts so I furlled the jib got the storm jib up. With the storm jib and a double reefed main I sailed all night at an average boat speed of 6 knots.



Storm jib taken through forward hatch

It was an interesting night because it was almost impossible to spend much time in the cockpit with the rain and the winds and the waves coming over the boat. So, I spent most of the night down below watching the chart plotter and napping. At times I would speak to the captains of the various ships and explain that I was not in much of a position to do a major course alteration and I just had to confirm with them that they knew where I was and where I was headed.



Four freighters on my AIS screen during the storm

The captain of the Cedar Glen was very kind and he asked if I was willing to accept some advice and I said, 'please Sir, go ahead'. He said "If I were you, I would get a bigger radar reflector, because those little things that you guys carry look just like clutter on our screens". He then offered me the updated weather forecast and wished me good luck. When the dawn broke, the wind had dropped down to a sedate 18 knots and as the sun was coming up, I took all my wet clothing up into the cockpit and spread it around to dry.



Drying out

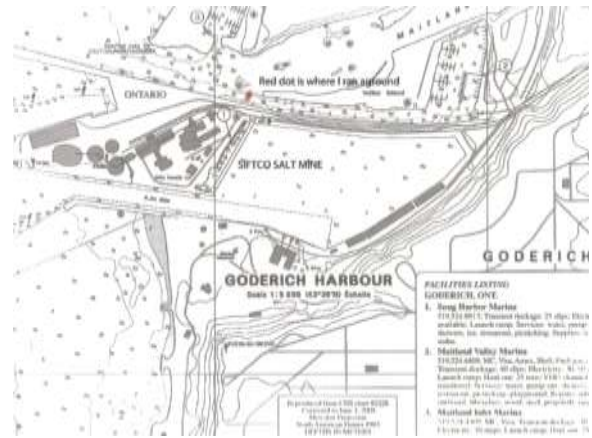
Then, I looked up at the main and found that there was a significant tear in the upper portion. So, I hove to, dropped the main and patched the sail. When I got going again, I went down below to check to see if there was any damage or if anything had moved significantly. I was quite surprised to find that everything down below was in pretty good shape, except that the sensor of my propane sniffer had come off its mounting on the bulkhead below the stove. Not having an appropriate staple, I decided to use a small piece of rigging tape to stick the wire to the bulkhead to support it. No sooner had I done this than an almighty alarm sounded. Obviously the sensor was mistaking rigging tape for the real thing. I pressed the mute button on the propane sniffer to silence the alarm, ripped off the tape, got a towel and started fanning the little area vigorously to

drive out any leftover vapour from that tape. But, within ten seconds, the alarm was back on and nothing I did would silence it.

I even checked to see that the propane tank was shut off, just in case it was an actual propane leak and not the rigging tape that triggered it. Propane sniffers do not have an on/off switch for obvious reasons but, having installed it personally, I knew about the in-line fuse. Removing the fuse gave me peace. About four hours later, I very gingerly reinstalled the inline fuse and was relieved to find that the alarm stayed off and I haven't heard from it since.

That day, the sailing was pleasant although it was a beat towards Goderich and, although the skies were pretty clear, I could see thunder clouds building over the land. I tuned in to the marine weather forecast and got the disturbing news that the Goderich area was under a severe squall watch! Repeatedly, the marine forecast and even over Channel 16 said "Goderich, severe squall watch. Expect winds of 50 knots in the squalls". Not wishing to go through another storm, and really being a little bit unnerved about a threat of gusts to 50 knots, I decided to pull out of the race temporarily which is allowed by the rules as long as you mark the waypoint, where you start your motor and return to that way point having gained no advantage by motoring, you can re-enter the race. The rules also state that if you dock your boat, you're not to accept any help from anyone also you're not to leave anything behind or take anything on to the boat. There is to be no "outside help" of any kind.

I had cellphone coverage so I informed the race committee of my intentions and also phoned the Maitland Marina requesting a slip for the night. The Maitland Marina lies between the Maitland River and the Siftco Salt Mine, the largest salt mine in Canada.



The actual channel into the marina has a small spit of land on the one side and a very high wall which leads up to the mine on the other side with several very large granite boulders at the base of the wall.

I uneventfully made my way down the unmarked channel, to the marina and tied up to the dock. No sooner had I done that then the heavens opened and there was a violent thunderstorm with lots of lightening. I kept the radio on and, at 9:30, the marine forecast announcement was that the weather watch for Goderich had been lifted. By the time I left the dock it was very dark. I tried to retrace my course along the channel away from the marina back into Lake Huron. The big wall that separated me from the hill, on top of which was the salt mine, looked very ominous and the rocks below were very intimidating in the darkness. It was very difficult for me to force myself to keep my boat close to that wall in the dark. Just as I was passing the little spit going dead slow, watching my depth and keeping an eye on the rocks, I ran aground. I tossed the anchor overboard and on the third attempt the anchor bit and I was able to pull the boat off and get back into the channel.

I studied the chart and saw a note which said that this channel is privately owned and is not dredged regularly. It is prone to silting and the charted depths may be unreliable. Having analyzed the situation very carefully, I decided that I had been too close to the wall and the deeper water had to be closer to the river. I motored down the channel the second time keeping a little further from the wall and ran aground again. This time the anchor would not bite and after several attempts I realized that I was not going to be able to kedge off with the anchor unless I could get the anchor much, much further away from the boat. To do this I strapped two life jackets together and tied the anchor on top of the



life jackets using them as a raft. I let them down the bow of the boat with 100' of anchor rode tied off to the cleat, took my clothes off and slipped down the boarding ladder, swam to the bow, picked up the little raft and towed it with its anchor 100 feet away from the boat.

When I reached the end of the 100' rode, I dropped the anchor and swam back to the boat bringing with me the two life jackets. I dried off, got dressed and started to haul in on the anchor rode. But the anchor would not bite. The anchor skipped along the bottom as if it were on wheels.

The next plan was for me swim to the opposite river bank with a 300ft line which I would tie to a tree. Needless to say that plan failed miserably because the current was too strong and I couldn't cross the river. Plan C, then was to swim back towards the marina behind the boat, to find the appropriate rock at the base of the wall, tie a big loop around the rock, get back on the boat and pull myself backwards into the channel from whence I had come. This worked very, very well and in no time I had the boat floating again and was able to retrieve the line because I had looped it over on a kind of wedged shaped rock, with the wedge pointing back towards the marina.



As further attempts to find the channel failed, I was reminded of the squirrels that I have at my house, that try incessantly to get on the bird feeder. I think squirrels are remarkably stupid because when one thing doesn't work they try it again and again and again. Why they don't realize after once or twice that what they are

doing is not working and give up is a mystery. Well I tried that same manoeuvre four or five times and the only reason I gave up was that the towel I was using to dry myself after each swim was incapable of absorbing another molecule of water, also, it was getting very blood-stained from all the zebra mussel cuts that I had on my feet and knees, from clambering over the rocks.



When I eventually accepted the fact that this was not a job that should be tackled at night, I pulled myself off the bottom for the last time and motored back to the marina where I docked. It was important to me that I was up at first light and on my way. By the time I had put everything back where it belonged, flaked the lines, stowed the anchors, got myself dressed and eaten a whole power bar, it was well after 1am.

I take back what I said about the squirrels being stupid. I think it is their strategy to try the things that won't work repeatedly so that when go to sleep at night, their brain doesn't need to take into consideration all those things which obviously don't work and it gets to focus only on the things that might work.

When I woke up at first light without the help of an alarm clock, I did not need to consult a chart. I knew exactly where the deep water was. Obviously, I had been too "chicken" to take my boat that close to the rocks in the dark. In the daylight, I pointed the Upstart outward towards the lake and motored past that wall within spitting distance of my wedge shaped rock.

Watching the depth as I went, I never saw less than 6.5 ft. ( I need 6.2 ft ). Then, in no time, I was out on the lake heading back to the waypoint.

That day was pretty uneventful. There was a lot of freighter traffic but it was mostly on the western side of the lake and I avoided that sector as I tacked back and forth all day towards the finish. I reached the Port Huron finish line shortly after 2 am.

After recording my finish time I dropped my sails and motored under the Sarnia Bridge to the Bridgeview Marina where, in the dark, I found a dock, tied up and slept for 4 hours.

That morning, I headed off down the St. Claire River where I was to pass through Lake St. Claire down the Detroit River into Lake Erie for the 300 mile trip back to Toronto.



The last part of my story I tell with the utmost degree of shame and embarrassment. I tell anyway it because there's a possibility that it will help another sailor avoid making the same mistake that I made. As I said, my goals for this race were first to complete the race and secondly to come back alive. The foolish mistake I made on the Detroit River nearly put me in the 50% category along with those waterproof socks.

I had set waypoints all down the St. Claire River and the Detroit River because I wanted to make sure, following my chart plotter that I stayed in the main shipping channel. For waypoints, I used islands, channel markers and lighthouses and other strategic objects. Although the actual channels are very well marked, it can be a little confusing and I wanted the reassurance of having a route on my GPS.



In the last part of the Detroit River before it meets Lake Erie, marking the separation of the lesser channel and the main channel is a small island which I had used as a waypoint. In the water just off the tip of the island is a white concrete lighthouse. I was motoring down the river assisted by the current and I also flew my jib. In the lulls, I was doing about 5 knots but when the wind picked up I would see SOG of 8 knots. I figured that I had a safe 10 or 15 minutes before I would reach the lighthouse and I went down below to check the charts for Lake Erie. Suddenly I felt an urgent need to be up in the cockpit. I raced up the companionway and when I looked forward, saw my boat hurtling towards the white concrete lighthouse. I punched the standby button on the auto helm so that I would have control, grabbed the tiller and the boat veered sharply to starboard missing the white concrete lighthouse by about 50 feet.

I'm quite glad there was nobody else on the boat to hear the words that came out of my mouth as I berated myself for failing Sailing Safety 101. I should not have gone below and I asked myself many, many questions to which there were no answers. Then after several minutes I forced my squirrel brain to come up with a "take-home" lesson, for in every mistake there has to be a "take-home" lesson. Mine was this: 'Never ever set a hard object as a waypoint or have one in your route because, early arrival could result in impact!' I did finish the Chicago to Port Huron Supermac race and, since the Upstart was the only boat in the second leg, one could argue that I came first. Then again, one could also argue that I came last, and I have yet to decide.

*every other year. Thus on even numbered years one can do 4 and on odd numbered years only 3.*

## The GLSS Quiz - Answered

The following is a brief quiz about GLSS and GLSS races published in the 2011 Summer Solo Challenger. It may take a little work to figure out the answers. The answers, at least ***my answers*** are in italics below:

Hint: You should be able to find most answers on the GLSS website: [www.solosailors.org](http://www.solosailors.org)

Comment: The Super Mac and Super Mac & Back are not "Solo Challenges".

1. Which Super Mac and Back is Longer; Chicago start or Port Huron start?

*The Port Huron Super Mac is longer by a couple of miles. The official distance of both races is 1034 NM or just the sum of the distance for the Chicago and Port Huron Mac times 2. The actual start and finish and turning points at the far end are a little different. The turning point for the Chicago Super Mack and Back is at Port Huron entrance buoy 8 while the start and finish for the Port Huron Super Mac and Back is at buoy 4 which is farther south in the lake. Similarly the start and finish for the Chicago race at Chicago is near the break wall and the turning mark for the Port Huron race is the 4 mile crib which is farther south in Lake Michigan. Actually, the finish is on a line between the break wall and the 4 mile crib. The result is that although the official distance is the same the actual distance for the Port Huron Super Mac and Back is a couple of miles longer. Sorry Chicago sailors, the Chicago Super Mac and Back is only the 2<sup>nd</sup> longest race in the great lakes.*

2. How may Solo Challenges can one complete in a summer?

*This really depends on the year. (The Super Macs are not considered solo challenges except for the first leg.) The most is 4 and the least is 3. One can only do one Mac a year as they are run at the same time. One can then do the Ontario 300 Solo Challenge and the Erie Solo Challenge every year. One can only do the Trans-Superior Solo Challenge on odd years as it is only run*

3. How many summers will it take to do a GLSS Solo Challenge in each of the Great Lakes and receive the GLSS 5 Lake Award?

*The quickest this can be accomplished is two summers because one can't do both the Chicago and Port Huron Macs in the same year as they are run simultaneously and the Super Macs do not count as "Solo Challenges".*

4. What is the longest Solo Challenge?

*The longest solo challenge is the Trans Super Solo Challenge at 326 NM.*

5. What is the shortest solo Challenge?

*The original and first solo challenge, the Port Huron Solo Challenge is the shortest at 230 NM. Since the Solo Challenge completion grants membership in the GLSS all subsequent Solo Challenges have been longer. The Erie Solo Challenge was configured with the dog leg back to Erie to meet this requirement.*

6. In what year were each of the five GLSS Solo Challenges initiated?

*1979 Pro Huron Mac Solo Challenge  
1997 Chicago Mac Solo Challenge  
2005 Trans-Superior Solo Challenge  
2007 Erie Solo Challenge  
2009 Ontario 300 Solo Challenge*

7. In what year were the Super Mac and Super Mac and Back initiated?

*1981 Port Huron to Chicago Super Mac  
2005 Chicago to Port Huron Super Mac  
2008 Both Super Macs and Back*

8. Which Solo Challenges require a Passport, NEXUS card or similar document?

*This can be a bit complicated and depends on whether you are a US or Canadian citizen. The Ontario 300 and the Trans-Superior skipper meetings are held in Canada, but the others are held in the US. One could start any of*



*the races from either the US or Canada though in some case it might not be very convenient. The finish for the Ontario 300 requires one to check in in Canada and the others require one to check in in the US.*

9. Which Solo Challenges are a class in a crewed race?

*The Trans-Superior Solo Challenge and the Ontario 300 are both sailed in conjunction with crewed races.*

10. Which Solo Challenges start in Canada? Which end in Canada?

*The Ontario 300 starts and ends in Canadian waters. The Trans-Superior starts in Canadian waters but ends in US waters. The other races all start and end in US waters.*

11. Which Solo Challenges could be completed without entering Canadian waters?

*Only the Lake Michigan Solo Mac could be sailed without entering Canadian waters. All the other races enter both US and Canadian waters as mandated by the race instructions.*

## **Want to contact contributors or board members?**

**Phone numbers and e-mail addresses for Board Members and contributors can be found in the member's only section of the GLSS web site. Also Board Members, Race Chairs, etc. can be contacted through the "Contact Us " button on the left side of the GLSS home page.**

**[www.solosailors.org](http://www.solosailors.org)**