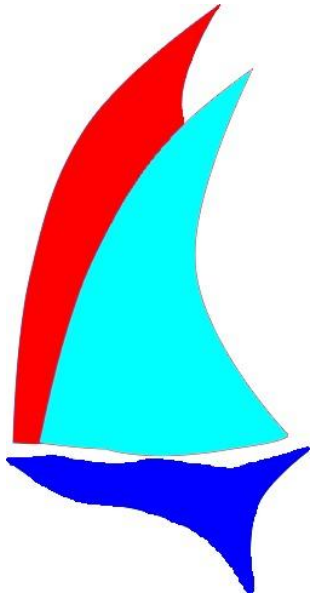


Great Lakes Singlehanded Society

2009 Lake Erie Solo Challenge



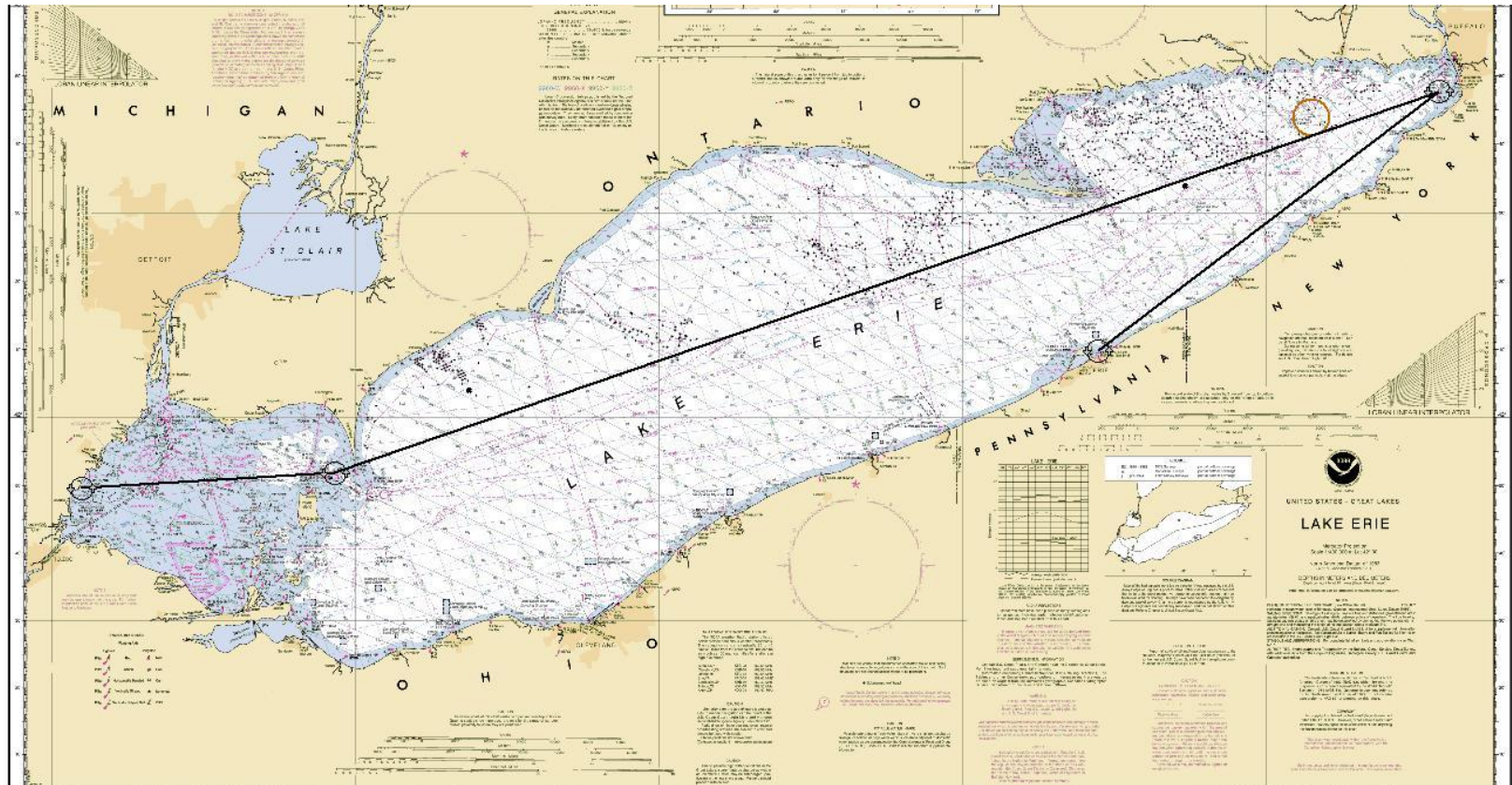
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The Lake Erie Solo Challenge is a Great Lakes Singlehanded Society Challenge run annually in August. Participants must be GLSS members, having completed this or one of the other recognized GLSS challenges, or may apply through submitting a sailing resume and completing a 100 mile / 24 hour solo qualifying sail. The GLSS truly is a Great Lakes Society with recognized challenges on all of the Great Lakes.

Port Huron Mac – Chicago Mac - Lake Erie Challenge
Lake Ontario 300 – Lake Superior Race

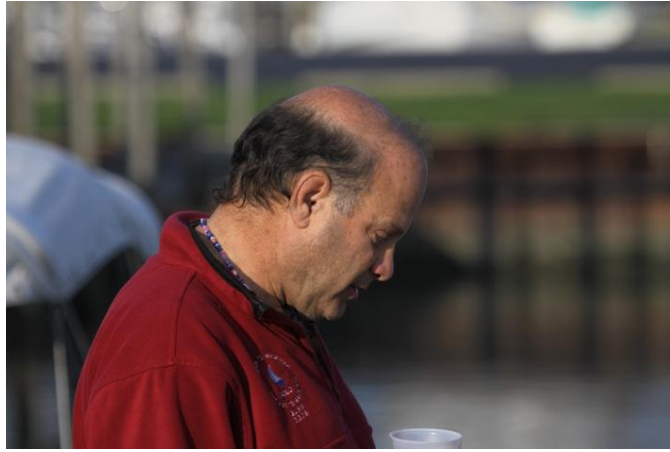
visit <http://solosailor.org> for more details



The course is 271 nm from North Cape YC, North of Pelee Island, rounding the Seneca Shoal Buoy off Buffalo and finishing in Erie off the Presque Isle harbor entrance.



Skippers assemble at North Cape Yacht club for the start of the 2010 LESC.



**Gail Bowdish - Blair Arden - John Lubrimir
Dave Evans and Wally McMinn relax or make last minute
preparations before the 2010 LESC start.**



**The cooks serve dinner for the Friday Night Skippers banquet.
The fleet rafts at the North Cape YC Guest Dock.
The Race Committee heads for the starting line.**



Dave Evans on *RATS0* heads out for the start with winds forecasted West at 20 knots for the first 24 hours.



Greg Gorny



Jim Turner

BOATS MAKE FINAL ADJUSTMENTS AT THE START



Brad Enterline



Blair Arden



Tom Hughes takes a few minutes to rig his Pink Spinnaker





Walt Norris picks his position on the starting line.





Greg Gorny



Jim Turner

After the start boats pick their angle and sail combinations for a long downwind sail.



Jeff Gordon



Paul Nickerson



John Lubimir works hard to get his chute flying. Getting it down will be harder.





Blair Arden tries to stay up with the big boats.





Dan Pavalat gets his T-10 Taz up to speed and a poster shot!





210nm to Buffalo



Jeff Gordon comes charging. As the boats moved down the lake the waves got room to build.





David Amatangelo and Dave Evans get up to speed.



Lake Erie would be a good test on auto helms as winds and waves build.





At 1903 Nicknack was in steady 6' to 8' foot waves with over 20 knot apparent winds at 140 degrees apparent. Surfs were consistently 12-14 knots. At 2000 the winds hit 30 apparent.



By this time David Amatangelo had damaged his pedestal and auto helm during an accidental jibe. Tom Hughes had his auto helm break but got it fixed temporarily. Jim Turner turned towards Sandusky, his home port, with damage. Dave Evans had spent an hour working on his auto helm. John Lubimir had wrapped his spinnaker and he like many others settled in for the night sailing with just a reefed main. Walt Norris had rocketed ahead with surfs approaching 20 knots.

As the cold front filled in overnight the winds stayed in the 30 knot range and the temperatures dropped into the 40s.

Jeff Gordon joined Tom Hughes and David Amatangelo with auto helm problems as all stayed at the helm all night. By dawn, all were heading toward Erie as a dark line of clouds revealed some water spouts along Lake Erie's southern shore.



At the 0800 radio call in 4 boats
were headed for Erie. One was
Walt Norris who had already
turned the Seneca Shoal Buoy at
Buffalo.

The rest of the fleet was around
Long Point where I crossed this
tug pulling a barge directly into
the waves.



A photograph of a dark, ominous storm cloud hanging over a turbulent, grey-green sea. The sky is a deep, dark blue-grey, and the water is choppy with white foam on the crests of the waves. The overall mood is dramatic and foreboding.

Waterspouts were reported to the south as
the winds moderated slightly for a fast ride
to Buffalo.

Hughes, Amatangelo and Gordon pulled into Erie followed shortly by Walt Norris smashing his own record with a 29:24:31 elapsed time.

Tom Hughes arrived at Erie with every intention of fixing his auto helm in flat water and continuing but no sleep and a great party at EYC tempted him to think otherwise.

Out on Lake Erie the fleet bore down on Buffalo with scattered dark clouds dropping wind and rain.

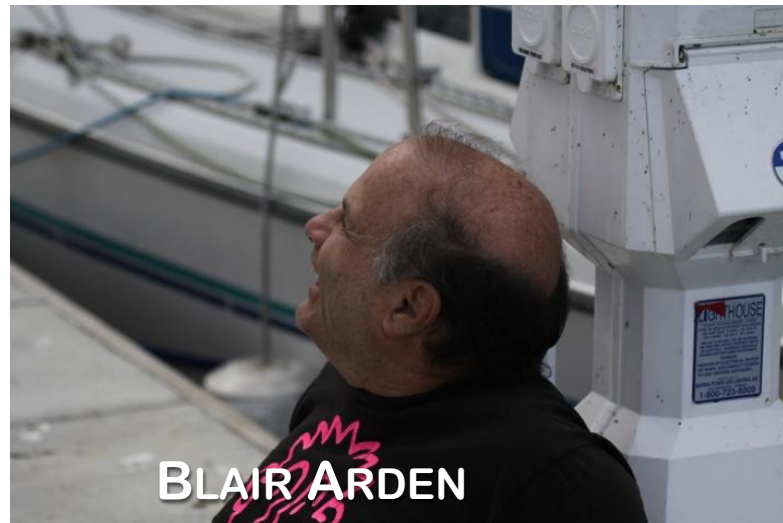
The winds slowly clocked to the north allowing a direct course to Erie as the last boats turned Buffalo by dark.

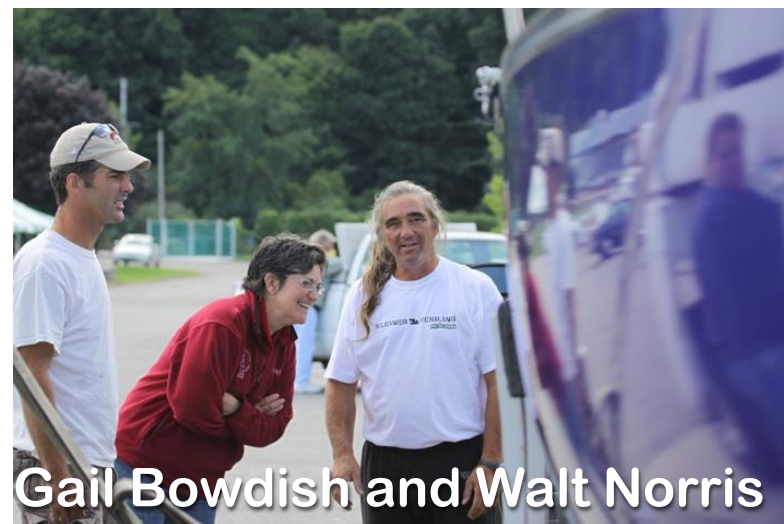
The ride back to Erie was quite lumpy as the winds shifted faster than the waves. As I approached Erie close to the shore I was surprised by an offshore shift as I watched nearby boats further offshore wallow in the slop without the shift.

The last boat was finished by 0835, less than 47 hours after the start.



Skippers wind down at Erie Yacht Club with all the boats in.





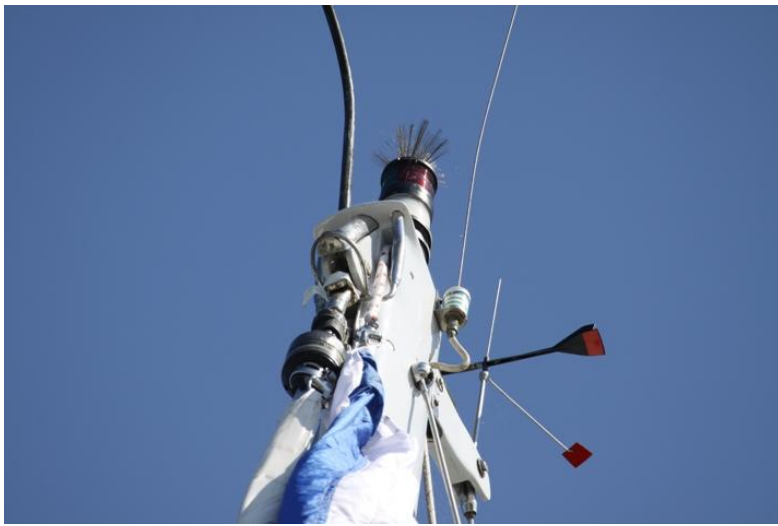
Everyone was there to watch Walt Norris put his boat on the trailer.





After a day to think about it, it was finally time to get the wrapped mess of a spinnaker off the forestay of Sola Fide.





Everyone lends a hand one wrap at a time as John Lubimir is sent up top for some final cleanup and to bring everything down.





The 2010 GLSS Lake Erie Solo Challenge is
scheduled to start August, 28th.

Visit <http://solosailor.org> for details and
registration or contact

Paul Nickerson, Race Chairman

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