

# CLSA Windword

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## Lake Michigan Circumnavigation

Submitted by Fred Smart

Our trip around lower Michigan was an idea that came to me as something that my sons, Joshua, age 13 and Mark, 15, would remember as a challenge that took three years to accomplish. Starting in Hammond, Indiana to Ludington, Michigan in 2004, Ludington to Mackinaw City in 2005, and Mackinaw to port Clinton Ohio, in 2006.

Hammond to Ludington  
July 2004

Our trip began as we left from the Pasturick Marina in Hammond, Indiana on a Wednesday afternoon around 4 PM. After loading provisions, kissing the dog, and petting the wife, we sailed due east. Now please understand all our previous sailing experience was on Clinton Lake, an inland waterway 10 miles long and one mile wide.

As we traveled out into the lake I noticed a tree stump (the first of three) floating about three miles off shore on the surface. I supposed hitting it with the sail boat would not hurt anything, but if it was a power boat at full speed it could be disastrous.

As darkness fell the first night it became quite dark and we could see the Chicago skyline behind us. And at 10 PM I could see the fireworks display from Navy Pier as it reflected against the Sears and John Hancock buildings, (For future reference it is every Wednesday and Saturday night during the Summer.) As the night wore on, I could see the glow of furnaces from the giant US Steel works along the bottom of the lake.

At about 2 AM, Joshua relieved me and as he took over the tiller we established the rule "keep the lights on the right and don't hit them. I woke up as the

sun was coming up and was relieved to see Josh was

still aboard.

We arrived at Benton Harbor/St. Joseph around 9 AM Thursday morning and decided to stretch our legs and visit the town. There is a park along the mouth of the river and a sea wall we

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could tie up to. As we returned to the boat after our walking tour, I saw one of the spreaders had split and we needed to fix it before continuing. Fortunately two hose clamps solved the crisis.

The next port up the coast is South Haven. We managed to arrive before dark and got a spot right in town. It reminded me of pictures I have seen of New England fishing villages. Friday morning I was up early having my morning coffee at the marina office when I noticed that nobody seemed to be leaving and there was great concern about the weather out on the lake. As I learned in the army, "Discretion is the better part of valor" and if the people smarter than me aren't leaving I'm not either. I spent the day between periods of drizzle visiting the shops and decided to just anchor out and stay aboard the hardware stores while my two sons discovered the movie theatre.

Saturday we planned to leave early hoping to make Grand Haven where there is supposed to be a park at the waterfront area with a neat fountain, but we were cautioned against it by the Harbor Master because it was Coast Guard Appreciation day and there will be no room at the inn, so to speak, so we aimed for the next port.

We left early and managed to arrive at Muskegon after dark (I am starting to really admire GPS) as we motored through the canal, we went right past the Silversides, a WW II submarine now a museum. We got into Muskegon late and we decided to anchor and spend the night. Around 11:30 PM the sky lit up as if the Deity was returning and bright lights were shining in every window. We quickly scrambled out of bed and on to the deck.



It seems that freighters come into Muskegon Lake to deliver coal and other things farther into the city and we were anchored right where this particular freighter wanted to go. Now the concept of first come first served doesn't seem to apply and it occurred to me very quickly that if we don't move, the Coast Guard is going to show up real soon and boy will they be angry. After weighing anchor and moving really close to shore, we tried it again and spent the rest of the night quietly.

Sunday we started out and with good weather and following winds, we had a short sail to Whitehall and decided to get off the boat and have pizza for dinner. The boys discovered that the marina was wired for cable but the boat wasn't. Oh well, maybe next year.

Monday found us again with calm seas and the wind from the southeast. Today we wanted

to reach Pentwater, which we accomplished with one small problem: the 12 volt car battery that the boys used to power their DVD player ran out of juice and they started complaining.

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Entering the harbor at Pentwater we discovered there were no facilities there, just a bunch of million dollar houses and no welcome signs. After anchoring we noticed that, according to the map, we could make Ludington easily by dark so off we went. I knew the boys were bored since they could no longer watch the first seven years of Stargate SG-1 DVDs but was mildly surprised when Joshua came up from below with a bandana tightened over his head and knew I was in trouble as his brother came up with a patch over his left eye and plastic knives in his hand. With as much courage as they could muster they mutinied and forced me to dock at Ludington, MI, 180 miles and six days from where we started, called their mother to come get them and refused to get back aboard. I guess they had had enough.

## Ludington to Mackinaw (2005)

My son Joshua and I trailered the boat, a Lugar 27, to Ludington Mich. and launched it at the exact same place we had removed it the year before, a small city-owned launch south of downtown. It was evening when we had everything secure and we decided to just stay at the launch overnight and leave in the morning. After a dinner in town we settled in for the night. Around 4 AM I heard noises and stuck my head out to check. There were boats everywhere, either launched or getting ready to launch. I found out there was a fishing tournament starting and we were right in the middle of it. As we slowly motored out to Lake Michigan it was suggested that we turn north as soon as we could since this was to be a shotgun start and they "will run you over to get ahead." We complied with their request.

The day stayed foggy until mid-afternoon and we didn't see the shore very much, another good reason for GPS. We reached the town of Arcadia where my nephew Bobby and niece Katy joined our crew, stayed overnight and left in the morning for Frankfort. The seas were rough and of course the winds were no help. Fortunately it was a short run up the coast that day.

The next day the weather cooperated and we had a beautiful sail along the Sleeping Bear sand dunes and stopped for a visit at the tourist town of Glen Haven, did the tourist thing and sailed out. We arrived in Leland where we pulled the boat out and parked it next to the local police station since we had to stop the sailing trip to go with the Boy Scouts canoeing in the Boundary Waters in northern Minnesota. But that's another story.

Returning to Leland a week later we retrieved the boat and launched it again; this time the young ones stayed behind and my brother and brother-in-law accompanied me as we headed north once more. Provisioning for adults is different than for kids: less food, more beer.

Crossing the Traverse Bay was the most difficult part of the trip so far, as I had never been out of sight of land before. As Captain Ron said, "If it's going to happen it will happen out there." Nothing catastrophic happened and we arrived in Charlevoix in time for the cocktail hour. After trying every bar within crawling distance, we retired for the night and part of the next morning, as we left through the canal the next day. We were escorted, or forced by the ferry to Beaver Island, into open water.

If you look at the map of Michigan up near the tip of where the little finger would end you will notice there is an outcropping called Waugoshance Point which I believe is Indian for shallow

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rocky bottom (as we soon discovered, when the boat started banging on it). Fortunately I have what is referred to as a swing keel which means there is a lot more noise than damage but it will still scare the Pussers run back out of you. As night started to settle, it occurred to us that we were not going to make Mackinaw and decided to pull up towards shore with a bunch of lights along it. As we got closer it became clear it was a state park with campers along the beach. We dropped the anchor and just stayed there, enjoying a late cocktail hour again.

Next morning we were up and off early since there was nothing left to drink, and as Pete preaches: "How can you drink all day if you don't start early in the morning?" As we approached the Mackinaw Bridge, the water was unbelievably calm. There was a little fog and so quiet it was surreal. We sailed under the bridge and marveled at its size and height. As we entered Lake Huron the only decision left was: left to Mackinaw Island or right to the city of Mackinaw. Decisions, decisions.

I would love to say that was it, but fate intervened and as we turned right I noticed the front stay turnbuckle had detached and the jib was the only thing holding the mast up.....

Mackinaw to Lake Saint Claire  
July 2006

This leg should be easy since it is all downhill from the Mackinaw bridge. Since Mark, my oldest boy, would rather get a job than sail with me, and Joshua says he can't miss football practice (in the summer?), I find myself looking for crew to complete my dream. I found out my brother-in-law Pete who sailed with me last year and is on enough drugs to not remember last year's trip, is available for a few days. My nephew Jeremy needed the experience, so I offered to take them along if they find their own way to the boat and home (remember "no experience is too great...") Off we went.

I was feeling much more confident now that there was a marine radio aboard. As a matter of fact, the first morning out as we sailed down towards Cheboygan we heard an exchange between the Bob-Blo sheriff and the Coast Guard about a missing fisherman and an abandoned boat. Now, growing up in Detroit I knew that Bob-Blo Island is an amusement park in the lower Detroit River, and to hear this exchange meant I had one powerful radio and antenna. Early afternoon weather changes forced us into Cheboygan harbor where the crew swabbed the decks in the rain and we had a barbecue after walking into town and acquiring some condiments...



Tuesday the weather improved and out into Lake Huron Pete, Jeremy and I ventured, with Rogers City our goal. After tying up and doing our daily routine (filling up the six gallon fuel tank and getting a case of beer and a bag of ice) I noticed that posted on the fuel dock wall behind the clerk was a sign titled "HOW TO PRONOUNCE MICHIGAN CITY NAMES" and the first one was Bois Blanc island, which is about five miles across the lake from us here in Cheboygan it is pronounced "bob blow". So much for the powerful radio.

Off we went the next morning, heading for Alpena. We learned how deceiving the charts can be since you must swing way out into the lake to clear the shallows and then back northwest to get to Alpena. It cost about three hours, not that we cared, but it was dark by the time we arrived. When we finally arrived in Alpena we were pleasantly surprised there were two large

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tents and a hundred people to greet our arrival, or so we thought. It seems there was a fishing tournament going on. Not that we held it against them. They let us in the beer tent for free.

Early the next morning, and I mean *early*, the fisherwomen were up and going. Seems Wednesday was ladies only at the tournament and they needed to be out there before the fish wake up.

After they left, I went back to sleep until a more respectable hour and we headed South one more time. Harrisville became the point to change crews. Pete and Jeremy left and my brother Ed and his kids, Bobby and Katy, came back for another trip.

Down we sailed to Oscoda and then across Saginaw Bay to Caseville, where there is a cheeseburger festival each year with celebrating parrot heads everywhere. Bobby left us here since he would rather spend time with his girlfriend than us. Go figure.

With a crew of two I continued around the thumb of Michigan and down lower Lake Huron. We stopped at Harbor Beach and then spent the day touring the town and improving the boat. In order to comply with ADA requirements, my brother borrowed a power screwdriver from the True Value Hardware store and installed a handicap rail to make it easier for the calorie challenged to get up.

The last stop in Lake Huron was at Lexington to change crew again. My brother and Katy got off and Pete and Jeremy came back for more flogging. Before leaving we went on a mission to find the best burger in town.

With beautiful weather and winds we entered the mouth of the Saint Mary's River and motored along, staying out of the freighters' way and seven hours later we emerged in Lake Saint Claire just in time for a summer shower. We were met at Metropolitan Beach Park just north of Detroit, and spent the weekend visiting family and friends.

## Lake St.Clair to Put-In Bay Ohio.

My son Joshua finished football camp and had no choice but to join me in the last leg of the trip down the Detroit River across Lake Erie to Put-In Bay, an island just north of Sandusky, Ohio that has a thriving tourist industry

We left Monday morning and filled our fuel tanks just before we entered the Detroit River and motored down, paying close attention to staying on the Canadian side of Belle Island. The city of Detroit looks much different from the water and you get pretty close to the tall downtown buildings. It takes the better part of a day to travel the length of the river and we motored into Lake Erie early afternoon and went looking for a gas station/marina. There is very little in the northwest corner of Lake Erie and we tried going into Monroe and up the Raisin River until about a mile up we saw a fuel dock. Unfortunately, Interstate 75 was between us and the gas. Nobody thought of sailboats when they designed and built the highway. We were 5 feet too tall. We walked about three blocks in 105 degree heat and filled the can and bought some ice cream.

Josh and I then headed east out into Lake Erie and towards Middle Sister Island thinking we would spend the night there. Little did we know that it is a wildlife preserve and covered 6" thick with bird droppings and no dockage. On to Put-In Bay.

After several hours of 2-3 foot seas I went down below and found several inches of water. Now this boat has never had a drop of leakage so I was concerned we may have damaged something when we put her aground to get gas in Monroe. Hard as I looked I couldn't find where it was coming in. As we neared what I assumed was Put-In Bay, I noticed they had one hell of a light house. Turns out there is a memorial to Admiral Perry there which seemed strange to me.

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Why put a historical marker in the middle of Lake Erie to the guy who went to the South Pole? Hey, go figure Ohio people.

To add insult to injury there was a regatta going on and not a dock finger to be had anywhere in Put-In Bay. My biggest worry was waking up in the morning underwater. Fortunately, I talked the guy running the show into letting us tie up on the outside of the breakwater, and off Joshua and I went to see the longest bar in the world to celebrate a safe arrival.

## Prologue

It is a short 15 mile run to Port Clinton and as we sailed out the next morning the seas were pretty choppy and the winds were strong. We were moving at a pretty good clip when there was a loud snap and down came the mast. It broke about 2 feet above the spreaders. Fortunately nobody was hurt and we were able to get the rigging and sails up and secured. We had to motor the rest of the way and call my wife to bring the trailer. As if God had not punished us enough the trailer broke down 2 miles from the marina and dropped the boat in a Burger King Parking lot.

## Race Committee Looking for Laptop

submitted by Gerry Christman

Microsoft has released a new version of their operating system that will make most older systems obsolete. Some of you may be considering upgrading to it at home.



The race committee is seeking a used laptop for calculating weekly race results. This would simplify and speed up calculations each week. The plan is to continue to record the results on paper and then use it onshore after the races are complete. The laptop does not have to be the latest technology to accomplish this.

### Hardware requirements:

- Any laptop that is capable of running Excel or MS Works
- Hard drive or diskette drive
- AC power supply

If you have a laptop that is or will become obsolete, consider donating it to CLSA. If you are interested in donating a laptop, please Contact Gerry Christman at [CHRISTMANZ@hotmail.com](mailto:CHRISTMANZ@hotmail.com).

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## CLSA Membership 2007

submitted by Bill Vokac

CLSA Members may now send in their checks for 2007 membership. The following members are already paid for 2007. Remember CLSA Membership qualifies you for a discount on slips, moorings and mast-up storage fees. It pays to Sail CLSA !

Atterberry, Rick & Gisele  
Bernstein, Neil / Hilary  
Budden, Joseph F, & Linda  
Cook, Timothy / Heidi  
Davies, David  
Freyman, Bill & Sarah  
Hanson, Richard, Susan G-H  
Holm, Matthew (Matt)  
Hutton, JD "Denny" and Sallie  
Karbarz, Joseph E./Denise R.  
Lebow, Mark / Donna  
Littleton, Paul & Jody  
Miller, Bob & Carol  
Moseley, Rodney & Bonnie  
Ort, Sara & Don  
Parga, Alex  
Pavia, Joe & Beatrice  
Stevens, Ron / Sharon  
Sturdyvin, Terry  
Trautman, Mike & Jolie  
Verdick, Marty  
Vokac, Bill & Ruth Ann

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## Upcoming Events

submitted by Bob Miller

### Be sure to mark your calendars!

January 27th (Saturday) at 4:00 P.M. there will be a gathering for all interested CLSA members at Dave and Betty Toland's residence in Bloomington, Illinois (2501 Driftwood) where we will be sharing memories, pictures, sailing artifacts and general fun times for a few hours. Dave and Betty Toland are always fun to be around so don't miss it! RSVP (309-662-3372 or [datoland2@hotmail.com](mailto:datoland2@hotmail.com)) so they know how many to expect.

\*Next on the calendar of interest to sailors is the Strictly Sail boat show, February 1-4 at Navy Pier in Chicago. Each year some of the CLSA members carpool up for a day or two of viewing the latest in sailboats of all shapes and sizes and seminars on various sailing subject matter from weather maps to lectures on island hopping in the South Pacific. Strictly Sail Chicago is a Sailboats only show in the Midwest to attend with seminars at many ability levels, special "show only discounts" on boats from 8' to over 50' and sailing accessories, and an R/C sailing pond to entertain kids and adults. For more details check out <http://www.strictlysailchicago.com> Bill Vokac ([b.vokac@mchsi.com](mailto:b.vokac@mchsi.com)) will be doing a "round-trip" on Friday (February 2nd) to Strictly Sail and has room for 1-2 people to ride along, leaving his house at 8AM and returning about 10PM.

\*On Feb. 10th (Saturday) CLSA will be conducting its first "race" of the year called the Samuel Plimsoll Memorial Frostbite Sail/Race/Dockwalk Party founded by the venerable sailor of the seven seas, CLSA member Joe Thompson. Gregg Forest (marina manager) has promised to have his facilities open for marina visitors (bathrooms) and there will be an RV parked by the docks in case you need to warm your extremities if it gets frosty on the waters. Bring your own boat if you wish. "Skippers meeting" will be conducted at Dock 1 at 12:30 P.M. and "the race" (winners are those who actually venture out of the marina on to the lake and back again) will start as soon as possible afterwards. If you don't have a boat you will be welcomed and a seat will be saved for you on another boat. Don't miss the snowflakes!

And last but not least, our club's annual Valley Forge Forage on Sunday, February 25th, a Winter walk in the woods at the Mascoutin recreation area. The group will gather at 2 PM in the parking lot and go for a walk through the woods that lasts about an hour. We will walk along the lake for a portion of the hike. The group will then retire to the Pizza Hut in Clinton for refreshments and

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conversation with our sailing friends. Contact Bob Miller ([sailing@ramiller.org](mailto:sailing@ramiller.org)) for details.



## CLSA Classifieds

**Hobie 16 Parts For Sale:** The U of I Sailing Club is parting out 2 Hobie 16's. We have a good mast, bent mast, good frame, very good complete rudder/telescoping tiller extension assembly in U of I colors, set of usable sails, and misc. other parts. All reasonable offers accepted and all unreasonable offers considered -- especially from fellow CLSA'ers. Contact Rob at [coatney2@uiuc.edu](mailto:coatney2@uiuc.edu), or 217-621-6309

**Windsurfer Parts Wanted:** The U of I Sailing Club is looking for parts to get our windsurfers going. We need: Bic Samba centerboard, Mast base parts for boards (Wayler, Mistral, Bic Samba, O'Brien, Kerma). We have Hobie parts and some windsurfer booms available for trade. If you have any of these parts (or any old windsurfing stuff you're looking to get rid of) please contact Rob at [coatney2@uiuc.edu](mailto:coatney2@uiuc.edu), or 217-621-6309.

**22 foot Spindrift**, sleeps 4, has a porta potty, sink, alcohol stove, 12 v light system. Interior is in great shape. 9.9 Mariner electric start in great shape. Sails are good. Furling jib is good. There is a for sale sign on her now out at the lake. The track on the jib furler is broken, but we have the new one, just have not installed it. It has a retractable keel and a tilt trailer. Land storage is paid for this year. We really need to move her. We had been asking \$4,500 or best offer. Our phone number is 485-3545...Cathy and Steve Stiff

**The Carlyle sailing association is selling several Sunfish.** These inexpensive, 14-ft. boats are a great introduction to sailing. For details, contact Paul Hanson, (217) 288-5840; email at: [PHanson@stcharleseng.com](mailto:PHanson@stcharleseng.com)

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## CLSA Officers 2007

**Commodore:** Bill Vokac  
**Rear Commodore:** Craig Rost  
**Vice Commodore:** Still trolling  
**Secretary:** Ben Williams

### Committee Chairs:

**Membership:** Bill Vokac  
**Race Committee:** Gerry Christman  
**Harbormaster:** Dave Toland (with help from several volunteers)  
**Education:** To be determined  
**Social:** Rick Wojnar  
**Publicity (aka Windword;Website):** Bob Miller



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