

Team GHO SLO- pronounced Go Slow
Jim and Sue waddington

First an explanation of the team name. Our club is Golden Horseshoe Orienteering (GHO) and we are certainly slow. GHO is an interesting collection of orienteers, adventure racers and trail runners.

We had heard good things about the E2C and thought that it would be worth a try. We arrived in Nova Scotia a few days early and visited some of Sue's family and did some research for a book we are writing about the Group of Seven painters. We found and photographed the sites of some JEH MacDonald, Arthur Lismer and AY Jackson paintings.

We had plenty of time to plan our route. We thought that we would visit as many high value controls in the eastern half of the map as possible; beginning south of the start, travelling east and then north to reach the Annapolis Trail safety station at dark.

We were the last of a large group that walked down the road south of the start. We used a gravel pit as an attack point, down the hill to the control 126. Next was control 243. Climbed the hill towards the boulder pile and was a little surprised that this wasn't the location. I looked more closely at the map and realized that there was another feature that was closer to the correct coordinates, top of the hill. Found it quickly and scurried down the hill towards 248, pleased that everything was going well.

Things went downhill in the other sense. We soon came to our first encounter with a harvested area. We got really badly caught up in it. We seemed to take forever to get through it. It turned out to be the worst cleared area that we would be in the entire race. Unfortunately, I overcompensated and during the rest of the race, we tried to avoid these areas as much as possible. On to 248 and 232.

Followed the power-line most of the way to 240. We took a bearing to the rock pile at 241. The distance and bearing to 237 were listed at control 241. I figured that the control was on the shore of the lake. I should have just navigated to the place using the map but instead followed a bearing, badly. After a little bit of muddling around, found the lake and the flag.

Made a bad route choice on the way to 250, we followed the south edge of an open area towards the road. It would have been faster to follow the power-line back out. We were impressed by the river then found our way to the centre of the circle for 262, the sluice.

235 was uneventful. On the way to 229, we picked our way carefully on a waterlogged trail, trying to keep our feet dry. Considering what was to follow, that was rather silly. We ran out of daylight just before 229. Put on the lamps and arrived at the Safety just a little later than scheduled. It was great to have some hot soup to wash down the oatmeal we had with us. Put on the rest of our clothes and then followed the creek to 230.

The full moon was visible through the trees. Great night.

We particularly like the challenge of night navigation. We just try to continue walking and take very safe routes. After our previous experience with the harvested areas, we decided to follow the creek from the path to the creek junction 218. It was a good plan but it was difficult to get through the woods.

Again, we tried to avoid the open area on the way to 217. As we followed the creek, I tried to squeeze by a thicket on the creek side. The bank gave way and I suddenly found myself chest deep in very cold water. I didn't swim so shouldn't be disqualified.

There was a nice view of a beautiful moon reflected in the pond near 217. We followed the trail into 216 from the north. Lots of water on the trails but we were still (foolishly) trying unsuccessfully to keep our feet relatively dry.

This was a decision point. We were running behind in our schedule. We had planned to head northeast and then west along the power line. Sue's IT band was acting up and she couldn't lift her leg over fallen logs so we decided to shorten our plan. I made a big tactical blunder here. It was 3:45 AM. Our short-cut plan was to be 214, breakfast, 228, 221, 222, 215- finish - which was quite doable.

Instead, we did 222, 211, breakfast, 197- finish. I think if we had taken a break, we wouldn't have been so foggy-headed to change our good plan for bad one.

Anyways we headed west to 222. We found the creek crossing to be a little scary in the dark.

By the time we got to 211, we were happy that we had done enough. Had a leisurely breakfast, enjoyed the sun, and then headed out 180 degrees in the wrong direction! Sue quickly straightened me out. We had plenty of time to do a few more controls but just did 197. Heard a loud, long growl just as we were leaving 197 so moved quickly back to the road for the long walk back. Checked in with the friendly folks at the Ingram West Safety and then finished at about 10:40.

It was a very well run event. Many friendly people looking after everything; it went very smoothly. It is a little different from other 24 hour orienteering races (Rogaines) that we have been in and we enjoyed these changes.

We were somewhat amused by the fact that so many people commented on our age. It was nice that they were concerned about our safety. I think though that the only real impediment to older people doing this sort of race is lack of flexibility. We can easily walk for 24 hours but climbing over deadfall has become difficult. Also probably, the loss of some grey matter was part of the problem during the night.

18 controls, 1570 points, found all the controls we looked for and they were where they should have been, two unfortunate route choices, one bad decision, one small blister (Sue), a lot of fun.

Thanks to everyone involved in the race.