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A Chronicle of Speed

Remembering the career of boat designer Ed Karelsen.

Edward Anthony Karelsen, designer and builder of hydroplanes, was born in Tacoma, Washington, in 1932 and attended the University of Washington College of Engineering for three years. He soon became involved in boat racing and discovered that by building hulls, as well as racing them, he could help finance his education. Karelsen first surfaced in Unlimited circles in 1963 when he built the Miss Exide. He is best known as the creator of a string of hydroplanes in the late 1960s and early 1970s that began with the fifth, and last, Miss Bardahl. In addition to building many outboards and inboards, he is



Hydroplane and Race Boat Museum

credited with the creation of eight Unlimited-class hydroplanes that won a total of 21 races, including four Gold Cups, and five national championships. Karelsen passed away on December 29, 2018, at the age of 86. A celebration of his life was held recently at the Hydroplane and Race Boat Museum in Kent, Washington. The following interview took place in April 1975, before two of his Unlimiteds were built, and was conducted by Craig Fjarlie as the two sat in Karelsen's North Seattle boat shop. The interview was first published in the August and September 1975 issues of the Unlimited NewsJournal.

UNJ: When was the first encounter with the Unlimiteds?

Karelsen: 1963. Miss Exide.

Ted Jones designed it and your company built it, and Jones supposedly made some innovations such as building the right sponson two inches wider than the left, and some changes to the bottom. Did they help?

The boat always turns to the left, so if you want to build one sponson wider than the other you can do that. If he's gonna make one wider, it matters how wide they were to start with. You can overdo anything. And whether there's any advantage to this. I can't understand why he'd do it. It's just to be different.

What was your overall impression of the Miss Exide?

Oh, it could've been a good

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Ed Karelson's first unlimited was the *Miss Exide*. Built from a design by Ted Jones in 1963, the boat (shown here at its launching) literally came apart while Mira Slovak drove it during its second appearance, the Diamond Cup in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

boat. Had a lot of mistakes in it. I told Ted it would turn better if we turned it upside down and ran it upside down, 'cause he wouldn't put any nontrips on his designs at that time. We'd have more (surface) on a limited hydroplane, now.

Do you have an opinion as to why *Miss Exide* crashed at Couer d'Alene?

Because it was running down-hill horribly. The shaft hole was drilled in the wrong place. None of the hardware fit, so we had to put the motor farther forward than it was supposed to be. It was out of balance and they didn't have time to change it. They knew it was going to happen.

What was your next contact with the Unlimiteds?

Miss Bardahl.

How did you and Ole Bardahl happen to get together?

Through Billy Schumacher. I've known Billy since he started racing. I built some of his first boats. Ole was fed up with Jones and so they called me over there and asked me to build a boat for them. I put in a bid to Ole and he said, "Go ahead." I think he had more fun on that one than on any other boat he's ever had. He sat around there for the first month and the next month we put him to work. He really enjoyed it.

Did he place any specific stipulations on the hull design? Or, did he let you do what you wanted? Did you have to push some of your ideas?

No. I sat down with Schumacher and Jerry Zuvich and we knew what we wanted. We took some variations on the old boat but made a lot of changes. Just a lot of little things people wouldn't notice too much. The main one was to put some nontrips on the darn boat so it would turn. Like all Jones designs, and Staudacher's—which were just

Jones' designs—were all flat-sided on the rear section, which to me is ridiculous if you're going to corner a boat. [Ron Jones' 1966 *Miss Bardahl* cabover did incorporate wider nontrip turning surfaces than previous designs—Ed.] Sponson angles were a lot different than what Jones had used—well, not a lot different because you're only working with a degree or two. And, there's different ways they are laid in. He varies his, makes a variable sponson on a lot of his boats. In fact, the sponson they're using now are the ones we set up on *Bardahl*. They're the same thing they run on *Pay 'n Pak*.

To what do you attribute the rather surprising early success of the *Miss Bardahl*? Most boats don't win six of eight races and a national championship in their first season.

Basically, to Ole Bardahl. He knows how to boat race. It isn't the extra money. Shirley McDonald proved that money isn't the answer. He put personnel in the right positions to do the things he knew had to be done. And, he left them alone. This is the same reason you have such a big success with *Pay 'n Pak*.



Eileen Crimmin

Perhaps the most famous of the Karelson unlimiteds was his second boat, the *Miss Bardahl* of 1967. The boat featured a lower profile than other hydros at the time and had an extended non-trip to aid in cornering. Driven by Billy Schumacher, the boat won six races during its maiden year and another four in 1968, while winning the national championship both seasons. It last appeared as the *Bardahl* in 1969 and its career ended in 1971 when, while racing in the Gold Cup as the *Hallmark Homes* and with Leif Borgersen behind the wheel, it crashed on the Ohio River at Madison, Indiana.

Jim Lucero knows what he's doing. Dave Heerensperger lets him do it. If you have a good crew chief and the money to work with, the rest is easy. It's easier to win than lose.

Next came the *Miss Budweiser*. 1968. What did Bernie Little want specifically? Did you make any significant design changes?

Bernie wanted an exact duplicate of the *Bardahl*. The sponsons were a little different from what the crew wanted. They were wider.

It seems it took a while to trim the *Budweiser* properly.

Yeah, well, the shaft angle was wrong. It was driving on the nose. I took it to Staudacher's shop after the Madison race and we fixed it. Then, they went to Pasco and took second.

Shirley McDonald had lost three boats in three years when she approached you.

Well, her crew came to me.

Did they have any special requests? What did you do differently than on the *Bardahl* and *Budweiser*?

Basically, it was the same boat again. They wanted a real light one. And, it was light. The *Bardahl* weighed, I think, about 7,200 [pounds]. And the *Bud* about 7,400. The new *Notre Dame* came out at 6,500.

And, that's what they asked for?

No, you just try and get it as light as you can. There's only so much you can throw away. The crew has to work with you, too. The equipment in the *Bardahl* weighed 4,200 pounds, so more than half the weight is the equipment going in. They can eliminate a lot of weight. Like the *Budweiser* had a great big 10-pound brass valve in the sponson to drain oil, and it had three-eighth-inch aluminum sheeting in the cockpit for floorboards. Well, things like that can be completely eliminated.



Sandy Ross Collection

Seeing the success of the *Miss Bardahl* in 1967, Bernie Little asked Karelsen to build him a boat just like it in 1968. The *Miss Budweiser* won 11 races and three national titles during the five seasons that it carried that name. It later saw action as the *Country Boy* in 1974 and the *Miss Vernors* in 1975. It has been restored as the *Miss Budweiser* and is currently on display at the Hydroplane and Race Boat Museum in Kent, Wash.

Do you think the crew failed to trim the *Notre Dame* properly?

Well, a lot of things happened with the *Notre Dame* that don't make sense. It was an exact duplicate of the other boats, except lighter. I spent the whole season with them, trying to solve problems. Every race it qualified faster than any others, broke qualification records. But, as soon as it ran in competition, it was wild. They finally solved the problem in the opposite direction than I would've. They increased the sponson depth, which should've made it worse, but made it better.

In 1970 you built the stars and stripes *Parco's O-Ring Miss*. There were obvious changes. For one thing it was narrower. What else did you do differently?

That's about all. Schumacher was driving again. He thought the *Bardahl* had a little too much air under it. He likes a boat down hard on the water. So, we narrowed it up. We weren't extremely narrow. There were a lot of boats that were successful that were the same width as ours. I think the *Wahoo*, if anything, was narrower. We measure the trap width, not the total width. So, one of my boats'll come out a lot wider

than any of the old Jones boats because I have a lot of nontrips on them. You gain another foot there. So, you measure your trap width and then your sponson width. Those are the important things. You don't care what the total width is.

A lot of people were critical of the *Parco*. A lot of people said it was wild.

It was. It was doing all kinds of things. The main problem we had was no money behind it. We couldn't do the things we had to do. The rudder was shaped wrong. They couldn't afford a new one. They didn't have props. It never had a fair chance. About the only boat I ever saw that was a complete flop, and was worked out, was the original cabover Jones that Heerensperger had.

Did you feel the problems with *Parco* were damaging to your reputation?

Possibly. Yeah. Unlimited people, both drivers and builders, are kinda like Saturday's Hero. They're forgotten about immediately after someone else has come out with something else. Well, I dominated the Unlimiteds for five years when no one even wanted to talk to Jones. So, I could go out and give

one away again, which I did with the *Bardahl*, to prove a point. But I'm not going to. I figure Jones... If they're so blind they can't see what they're getting into, and they're paying that kind of money for it, then let them keep doing it!

Your Miss Budweiser crashed in Tri-Cities in 1970. What caused it?

He just fell into a big hole. Had his foot on it when he was trying to catch [Tommy] Fults. He just blew the nose off it.

The Notre Dame team could never put a winning boat together. Why?

Shirley McDonald had a lot of good personnel. But there was always a hassle. Mainly her indecision. Like I told her one day, "You should find the meanest son of a bitch you can for crew chief. Hire him. Let him make all the decisions. But, she's a normal female, and she ran it that way.

During the '60s when you were building Unlimiteds, a number of tragic accidents occurred. What effect did these have on your efforts?

I really don't worry about the safety part. It's really up to the driver. You build a lot of things into a boat that make it safe, and from there on it's how the driver drives and what the crew does. The only ones you lose are the fast ones. You can lose the most perfect boat out there if it's running fast. You can go down the list. When they had six drivers killed in a couple of years, well in my opinion those drivers killed themselves. About the only guy I'd say who was an innocent bystander was Don Wilson. The *Notre Dame* landed on top of him when he was just racing alongside.

Now, this isn't a safe sport. The guys who want to race are going to race and there's a hazard to it. But, every one of those boats that



Hydroplane and Race Boat Museum

With the success of the *Bardahl* and *Budweiser*, Shirley Mendelson McDonald then got into the act by ordering her own Karelson boat in 1969. Many say the *Notre Dame* was the fastest of the Karelson unlimiteds, but it would never win a race in three seasons of racing. The boat's career came to an end at the 1971 Seafair Regatta in Seattle when, with Billy Sterett, Jr. driving, it took a bad bounce during the final heat and broke in half.

went, went because they showed previous tendencies to do that. Like the *Bardahl* with Ronnie Musson. He stuffed it and got killed. But he knew the possibilities were real high on it. They shouldn't have raced the boat until all those problems were eliminated.

When Thompson killed himself, he was out to prove a point. He barrel-rolled the boat. Whenever Warner Gardner got into trouble, he said he could turn the boat left and recover. Well, he did it once too often, and fell into a hole and barrel-rolled it. Tommy Fults just did the same thing with a boat that had no nontrips on it. Little dinky nontrips, and as soon as he turned it in a hole it caught. So, you can right down the list. You can't really blame the equipment. The drivers don't have to race 'em. And you can run these old dogs all year long and no one's going to get hurt in them. They don't go fast enough.

What are your impressions of current hull design?

Well, they're really nothing new. It seems everything is tested on limiteds for years and then it finally goes in an Unlimited. If it becomes successful they accept it. If it isn't

successful, they don't. Jones gets credit for making the design successful. Jones claims the design, but the picklefork cabover is nothing that hasn't been run before. The first picklefork I ever saw was in the '50s, an outboard. Jones probably knows well as I do that this was the only way to go.

What about Henry Lauterbach?

His designs are darn good. I think they're behind. He's already shown it in all the small classes. He's being beat. The only 5-litre I've got running is the *Champagne Lady*, which has beaten all the Jones and all the Lauterbachs when it's running right. [The *Champagne Lady*, renamed *Little Oly*, won the 1975 World Championship—Ed.] Actually, most of the builders can put out a good design. It's who gets it. Both Jones and Lauterbach have a lot of boats that are running in first place and hold world records, and a lot of them that are last, the "same" boats.

You seem to favor cabovers now.

Yeah. For one reason and one reason only. It's the best place to be. You're out of the way. The driver can see.

Yet, all of the boats you built were rear-cockpit Unlimiteds.

Because they were the old design, and no one wanted a cabover. First of all, Ron Musson was killed in a cabover. So, like Sterett says, “the only reason to be sitting up front is to be the first one to the accident.” Well, his concept is wrong. The only way you can get hurt sitting in the front, over any other position, is if you nose dive. Well, immediately you’re going to kill the driver. But you should know before you race that it’s not going to do that. The boat should be proven correct before you race it. The ones that have done it, “they” had a lot of warning. The big problem you have in Unlimiteds is that everybody has a season to meet. They don’t have time to work it out.

What is your theory on the shape of a boat’s bottom? Do you prefer a definite break at the pressure point? Or, should it be a rounded surface?

It should be a rounded surface. Jones puts a definite break in his new ones because he has no choice, using the honeycomb aluminum. Where your lifting surface and



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The next in the string of Karelson unlimiteds was the *Parco’s O-Ring Miss* in 1970. Despite using equipment from the disbanded *Miss Bardahl* team, as well as several crew members and driver Billy Schumacher, the patriotic boat vibrated badly and gave its driver a rough ride. It would never win a race. It saw action in 1971 and ‘72 as the *Miss Timex*, then was retired.

planing surface meet, I make a round break. I wouldn’t use a sharp one. But again, it’s all the personal preference of the designer. He can do it any way he wants. Regardless, every type of bottom configuration has been tried.

How do you feel about the horizontal stabilizer?

I believe they are publicity gimmicks. Most of the people that are buying them think they work. You can take ‘em off and the boat will probably run just as well. How

can you possibly control a boat with an airfoil that you can’t move? Now, you can set it up so it will affect the attitude of the boat. The boat is being worked on by three forces: one is the drag, another is the thrust of the propeller, and then the airfoil. The minute the boat gets airborne the first two forces are removed, but the airfoil is not. It could give a wrong effect. But I’ll probably go ahead and put one on a boat too, because everybody thinks it looks pretty.

Do you regard the turbo-charged Allison as an important development?

It’s a real good setup. It should work fine if the crews make it run right. But they’re doing things wrong. Their power is coming on at a high range. Jerry Bangs, when he was driving the *Red Man*, says it’s got all kinds of power after 160, but the race is over by then. They think they have to run 180 down the course, which is ridiculous. You should be able to run from 100 to 150 quickly. So, they’re doing something wrong, which doesn’t make sense to me. But, then, that’s nothing new in Unlimiteds.

Do you think there’s a potential for turbine power?



Jeff Mathison

After the *Hallmark Homes*, the former *Miss Bardahl*, was destroyed during the 1971 Gold Cup in Madison, Don Kelson built a replacement for the boat in only three weeks. An exact duplicate of the *Bardahl*, the boat had some respectable performances, but never won a race. It’s pictured above with driver Leif Borgersen standing on its deck. The boat saw action the following year as the *Miss Van’s P-X* and in 1973 as the *Red Man*, then was pulled from competition because it was coming apart, no doubt due to its hasty construction.

I don't think the owners want to spend that kind of money. It's too expensive.

How about a Rolls Griffon engine?

Bernie Little's sittin' on them. A lot of development work was done by the *Harrah's* crew. They'd work real well. But I think the potential is automotive. I think it'd be worth the gamble to try.

A lot of people have tried, have gambled, and it doesn't seem to work.

Well, that doesn't mean it won't work.

What do you think could be done?

Well, first, the advantages. A lighter hull. It wouldn't be any smaller, but it would be lighter. Your power-to-weight ratio would be much better. Your total expense would be much less. Now, it's going to be expensive to build an automotive engine, but one of the biggest expenses is on the road. OK, you could haul an automotive-powered boat with one truck, two guys, and put four engines in the truck. The rig would be lighter, less expensive to run. You could do more experimenting. Don't try to be a winner. Prove the boat out. Make a third-place boat out of it. There's only a couple of boats you have to beat



Hydroplane and Race Boat Museum

Seven years after this interview, Ed Karelson produced another unlimited, the cabover *Oh Boy! Oberto* that he built for Fred Leland in 1982. While the boat would never place within the top three finishers at an event, it enjoyed a long career and had many different drivers sit in its cockpit. Among other names, the boat also saw action as the *Executone*, *American Speedy Printing*, and *Miss Rock/KISW*. Its last appearance was in 1992 as *Miss Tubs*.

right now anyway. Compete with them. Prove the design. Then you'd prove a point. And, you could do it or half the price.

How does this tie in with the Grand Prix class, their efforts?

Now, they're trying to build up this Grand Prix to compete against the Unlimiteds. Well, that's kind of like one set of kids want to steal something from another set of kids. The only way to beat somebody is to beat them at their own game. There's no reason the Unlimiteds should change their rules so that somebody who doesn't want to buy

one of their boats can beat them in another boat. If a person who was going to spend large money on a Grand Prix went out and spent the same money on an "Unlimited" Grand Prix, they could probably come out highly competitive.

In what class of racing—outboards, limiteds, or Unlimiteds—have you received your greatest personal satisfaction?

All three. No one in particular. I like them all. I've done great in all of them. The only one you get any publicity out of is Unlimiteds. I'd say the finest boat I ever built was the *Miss Bardahl*. It was so successful.

How about the drivers who drove your boats?

I'd say Sterett, Schumacher, and Chenoweth were all excellent. Borgersen I'd say is inexperienced. He's had all his experience in the Unlimiteds. Actually, all of those drivers are fairly good. Give any one of 'em good equipment and they're going to win. And then there's Bill Muncy. He's excellent. He's smart. I wouldn't trust him changing plugs, put as a driver he can drive anything.

He's still alive. ❖



Hydroplane and Race Boat Museum

Karelson's last unlimited was the *Miss MerCruiser*, which he built for Jon Prevost in 1986. It made only two appearances that year and was never seen again.

Spring Training on the Columbia River.

by Chris Tracy and the UNJ Staff

Sunny skies and warm weather welcomed six unlimited hydros to a full day of spring training in the Tri-Cities, Wash., on May 31. All teams tested and some found the Columbia River down-right testy.

Unlimiteds, vintage unlimiteds, and a GP ran the course. Even though it was Friday and a workday for most people, the testing session was well attended and streamed on SWX TV, a KNDU/NBC affiliate. A temporary fence surrounded the hot pits and APBA membership was available for purchase and required to enter the hot pits. The event was free for fans outside of the hot pits.

Dustin Echols opened the day by taking the 440 *Bucket List* onto the course. He had to be happy for a brief second or two. He reports that his boat was running 188 mph on the straightaway.

Then, a brand-new fitting failed on an oil line that feeds the gearbox. As a result, two gears inside the gearbox were melted, and there was damage to the engine. When the 440 was brought back to the pits, the team also discovered hull damage to the inner air trap. That was it; they were done for the day.

Tom Thompson took the U-11 *J&D's presented by Reliable Diamond Tool* out and soon felt a vibration. He took the boat back to the dock where his team found that a gearbox part needed to be replaced. Problem was, they didn't have it in their truck, which meant that they, too, were done for the day.



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow

[Top] The drivers, from the left, Jimmy Shane, J. Michael Kelly, Cory Peabody, Dustin Echols, Tom Thompson, and Andrew Tate. [Middle] The 440 *Bucket List* was the first boat on the course. [Above] The U-12 Graham Trucking makes a run.

Jimmy Shane took the *Miss HomeStreet* out several times and ran a total of 21 laps, including one lap of 164.775 mph. The team tried a variety of engine, prop, gearbox, and wing combinations and ran well.

The defending national champion U-1 *Delta Realtrac*, with Andrew Tate driving, ran nine smooth laps. Of note, this was their first run under the leadership of their new crew chief, Seph Parshall. Owners Mike and Lori Jones both attended, as well.

J. Michael Kelly took the U-12

Graham Trucking out multiple times and ran a total of 21 laps, the fastest being 156.304 mph. His boat debuted a new color scheme for 2019.

Corey Peabody could not get the igniters to work in the team's other craft, the U-98 *Graham Trucking American Dream*, for most of the day. But, fortunately, near the end of the testing day Peabody got the engine started and ran seven laps over 130 mph, a critical part of Peabody's effort to re-qualify as a driver. His boat, by the way, featured an impressive paint scheme

that was reminiscent of the first boat that Rob Graham sponsored in 1999.

As for the others seeing time on the course, Jamie Nilsen drove the GPW 55 boat that is owned by Scott Pierce. Unfortunately, there was motor damage in one run.

Three vintage unlimited boats also participated: the 1958 *Miss Bardahl*, the U-77 *Miss Wahoo*, and the U-80 *Blue Chip*. All of the vintage boats made successful test runs and many fans commented that the paint scheme on the *Blue Chip* was great. It was good to see Mitch Evans in the boat's cockpit. ❖



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow

[Above Left] The crew of the U-1 *Delta Realtrac* prepares an engine for a test run on the Columbia River. [Above Right] With Jimmy Shane at the helm, the U-6 *Miss HomeStreet* completed eight laps over 160 mph. The team turned in the day's fastest lap of 164.775 mph. [Right] The *J&D's presented by Reliable Diamond Tool* heads onto the racecourse with Tom Thompson driving. He would later feel a vibration and returned to the pits, where the crew discovered they needed to replace a part in the gearbox. Unfortunately, the part wasn't available in the team truck.



Lon Erickson



Lon Erickson



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow



Lon Erickson

[Top] Corey Peabody drives the *Graham Trucking American Dream* onto the Columbia River. [Middle Left] Andrew Tate and the defending national champion *Delta Realtrac* tested various combinations of props, gearboxes, and wing settings and turned one lap of just over 160 mph. [Middle Right] Jimmy Shane having a chat with a race fan. [Above Left] The vintage *Miss Wahoo*. [Above Right] Mitch Evans has restored his former *Breathless II* boat as the *Blue Chip*, a name the that hull carried in 1963 and 1964.

Introducing Corey Peabody.

Corey Peabody has driven an unlimited hydroplane in only one race—the 2016 Gold Cup at Detroit. This year he has a new opportunity. He will take the wheel of Rob Graham’s second boat. You may well ask, “Who is Corey Peabody and why was he chosen to drive the U-98?” On June 10, Craig Fjarlie met with Peabody at his construction work site and conducted the following interview. The conversation will help explain Peabody’s racing background and clarify why he is qualified to slide into the cockpit of the Graham Trucking American Dream.

UNJ: When and where were you born?

Peabody: I was born in Bellevue, Washington, May 2, 1979. I’ve lived in Kent my whole life, actually.

You’ve known J. Michael Kelly since childhood.

Went to elementary school with Mike Kelly, went to Meridian Junior High with Mike Kelly, and went to Kent-Meridian High School with Mike Kelly. We grew up about 10 houses away from each other all my life.

So, you’ve known about his racing since the beginning, almost.

Yes, since the very beginning. I grew up going to the races. I’d go over there, or they’d come to the house and pick me up, and we’d head off to the races. When we were in junior high, lots of times I’d go with them. So, I’ve been around it since, man, probably late ‘80s, early ‘90s, I would say. Probably more early ‘90s when I started coming around.

And then he got you involved.

Right, he got me involved.

You started racing outboards.

Yeah, my first race was Scooteney Reservoir [in Eastern Washington – Ed.] 1998. They gave me the shovel-nose Roger Rabbit A/J boat that they had for years and years and years and years. He stuck

me out there and off I went.

You raced outboards then for a while before you moved on.

Correct. I raced outboards on and off. I had my motorcycles that I liked to play with, and I had the boats, so I was kind of bouncing in and out of the outboard stuff for a while. I did all the stock and mod classes, and then I jumped into the tunnel boats when Mike was doing that with Dean Hobart. Then bought some PRO stuff and did the PRO capsule stuff and that was kind of fun. And then decided that we wanted to have an inboard, so my wife and I bought an inboard. Went inboard racing. That was a lot of fun and we loved it. Had a really good run in the inboard and then kids came along. I slowed down with the inboard, took some time away and all that stuff. I ended up selling my inboard, but then I bought a brand new one. I built a brand new one.

You built it yourself?

Yeah, I built it. I got a kit from Bert Henderson.

What class was that?

It was a 1-litre Mod boat. I actually just sold it last weekend. I never raced it.

You never raced it?

Never raced it. I tested it. It was a great boat, it’s beautiful. I sold it ‘cuz I don’t have the time to put it in the water the way I would want to. My kids keep us so busy and now with the unlimited keeping me busy



Chris Denslow

it was, like, time for it to go.

If we can back up a little bit to the outboards, did you have a favorite class?

D Mod was my favorite class. The speed of it, the noise of the motor. Just liked that class. D Stock was a fun one for me as well. I loved my D Stock boat. I had that Hemp boat that I got from Brian Palmquist and that thing was an absolute rocket. If I was to ever run outboard again, I would get into D Stock, D Mod. That is what I would do.

Who did your engine work? Did you do it yourself or did you get help from people?

Steve Benson did some stuff for



In 2016, Peabody drove the U-57 *Spirit of Detroit* at the Gold Cup on the Detroit River. In preliminary heats, he finished third three times and fourth once.

us and John Steen did some stuff for us on the D Stock.

In the inboards, did you race a different 1-litre before the one you built?

Yeah, I bought a 1-litre. I only ran that for a few years.

Did you have a name on it?

It was the *Fastracks Motorsports* boat.

OK.

That was my sponsor. We did great. We won Eastern Divisionals, we won the world title. Jim Sechler beat us in high points. We were crisscrossing the country chasing it but Jim was fast. Jim was the owner, Dan Kanfoush was the driver at the time. It's the boat that Mike [J. Michael Kelly – Ed.] drives now, the *Shenanigans* boat. Back then, before it was owned by Tim [Collins] it was owned by Jim. And that was the boat we were chasing. They were fast. They hold all the world records, but it was a good time.

Did you drive any other inboard classes?

I did. I drove 2.5 Stock for Shawn Warren, I drove 5-litre for Jeff Bernard and Kip Brown. This year, I'm supposed to be driving the 2.5 Stock for Jason Aslakson, but I've been a little too busy. The first two races we were in Florida for my kids doing what they do and then we haven't had the third race yet, but we'll see how it is when it comes down to it. I've got a lot on my plate

right now.

Did J. Michael help you get into the unlimiteds? You've been working on the crew a little bit.

Right. I started helping him in 2014 with the Graham stuff when it was owned by Ted Porter. I crewed with them for three years and it just kind of evolved where a lot of the crew already knew me and knew that I was into inboards and stuff like that. It turned into where it's always nice to have a back-up driver or someone in your camp so that's how the conversation started and then it became, well, we're gonna start giving you some laps here and there. Since I was already there at the races and we had two boats, I could jump into one and go run some laps and start getting my

130 laps.

Yeah.

That's just kinda how it evolved.

When you work on the crew with the unlimited, do you have a specific job that you're responsible for, or are you kind of wherever they need you?

I started out as just the cockpit guy, you know, make sure everything was ready for Mike. Air was on, fire extinguishers were on, cockpit was the way he liked it. Then it kind of evolved and I became a cockpit/deck guy and I started working along with Jim Bakke and Brian Pyziak on the deck and learning about the motors and all that stuff. It kind of turned into where anything above the ground I was kind of doing. I kind of put myself in that situation 'cause I'm the kind of person who likes to know.

Yeah.

You know, the more I can do to help them kind of took stress off them, especially when we're thrashing, so it worked out.

But you weren't really an engine, a turbine guy.

No, by no means am I a turbine person. I can pull the motor out, I can put the motor in, but I'm not an engine builder.

You don't take 'em apart.

No, I'm not taking them apart. That's a special person and I'm not



This year, Peabody will drive the U-98 *Graham Trucking American Dream*.



Corey Peabody and the crew of the *Graham Trucking American Dream* getting ready for a run on the Columbia River at Spring Training.

that person.

Now, you said that you started getting some laps when Ted Porter owned the team. Where did you get to drive the boat?

My first time was at the test session in Tri-Cities. That was the first time I got to take the boat out after Mike and Jesse [Robertson]. At the time we were done testing.

Jesse?

I can't remember. Tom Anderson said, "Let's go out and get you a few laps."

Do you know what year that was?

I'm not quite sure. I think 2016. I think we got it all done in one season, 'cause we started my laps there. They weren't counting them there, but I got to go out and burn a few laps there and then...

Got to see what it's all about.

Yeah, yeah. Then in Tri-Cities, the race is where we actually started doing my laps so we could count 'em, each one.

Then in 2016, you had a chance to race the boat.

Yeah. I got my laps done at Seattle. Did some laps in Tri-Cities, finished all my laps in Seattle. And then, I was just gonna go crew at the Gold Cup in Detroit, but Ted Porter and Dave Bartush struck a deal where I could drive the 57 at the Gold Cup. That's what we did.

I was able to jump in the seat and go run in the hundredth running of the Gold Cup, which was pretty freakin' awesome to be in. That's a good race.

Now, you weren't a front-runner.

No.

You got a third on one heat...

I got all thirds. (Laughter.)

OK.

Yeah, I think I got all thirds and we scored points. Didn't make the final, but that's OK. I was there, I was part of it.

You had a chance, anyway.

Yeah. I think I qualified the boat at 142 or 148 or something. I'm not sure, but I was there and that was pretty neat.

Had you hoped to be able to drive again after that race?

Oh, yeah, that's always the plan but, you know, the cards didn't fall that way. I didn't know what the whole plan was but Mike won the Gold Cup that year.

Yeah.

At that point Ted had done everything he wanted to do in boat racing and, before you know it, the team sold and split. Kinda just watch it all go away real fast. I took some time away after that and went with my wife and kids. The kids keep me busy with traveling, what they do, and it was just really exciting when I got the phone call from Rob [Graham] to come back as a team, two years later.

That was this year, or last year?

That was this year, just a few months ago when he called after he had purchased the Leland stuff. They knew what they wanted to do. I had a lunch meeting with Brian Hajny. They wanted to see if it was something I'd be interested in doing, to drive it. Brian Hajny and I had lunch and I told him I'd be interested and waited around for about a month. Then Rob decided that yeah, that was something he did want to do. He gave me a call and I've been down at the shop every day since, trying to get this thing ready to go testing and...



Lon Erickson

In the cockpit of the *U-98 Graham Trucking American Dream*.



Lon Erickson

Being interviewed after his Spring Training run.

Between your day job and working at the shop, you've had some long hours.

It's been a lot of long hours. I have not been away from my kids this much in their entire lives. You know, night, night, night, night, there I go, down to the shop, but they know what I'm trying to do.

Yeah.

Hope we can get it done and I'll get back to a regular life.

How did you get the team put together? Did you help recruit people to work on the boat, or...

Kind of. When Rob bought the team we had to buy the second team. Basically, we just brought the "seven" [U-7] guys back. So, it's really the same team we had when we ran the two boats, the "five" [U-5] and the "seven." Now we have basically the 12 crew, got a little bit bigger, but now my 98 crew is guys that we had when we were runnin' with Ted. Everybody fell into place. We knew who we wanted so it worked out really well.

So, you didn't recruit a lot of people who'd never done this before.

The only one we brought in that was not a part of it is Chris Sparks, who's a friend of mine and Brian Hajny who had done a lot of work with us on the limited boats.

OK.

He fell right in. He's doing

great, so it has basically worked out.

When you got a chance to run the boat at Tri-Cities, how did it compare to the one you drove in 2016, the 57?

The 57, the one I raced?

In 2016, the one you ran in the Gold Cup. How did it compare in terms of handling...

Well, it's hard to say right now because we haven't even got the boat really going.

Yeah.

We only turned like a 136, you know. We're not worried about trying to get it out there and really run it hard right now. We're focusing on testing. It had been put away in rough shape, so right now, the focus isn't... I don't even want to compare it to the 57, even though the 57 was a good ride and all, but I can't give you an honest answer right now.

You haven't had enough time in the boat.

Yeah, exactly. I mean, it's just hobby-horsing all over the place. We saw exactly what it was doing. We're gonna change some stuff to make it go faster, but I don't want to throw out a comparison right now, because it's just... (pause)

Too soon.

Way too soon. We want to just get it working, step-by-step. Get the boat to where it can be.

Well, a lot of people liked the paint job. It looks good.

Yeah, it's very patriotic. It's a throw-back to 1997, the first boat Rob ever sponsored.

OK.

He was excited when he got that, you know, "This is what I want to do." I'm glad he did it. He asked me, "Are you happy with what we're gonna do?" And I'm like, "Yeah, because I think people are really gonna get involved. People love that stuff with the Pico and all that. It's a big deal. You see it out there and you just follow it. I'm not much of a social media person but people on social media are lovin' that thing."

Yeah.

I'm happy, it's neat to see that, and it's exciting for Rob to see that people are really involved in it. They like it, they love it, so I hope we can put something on the water that's gonna do decent, you know. It's like, the plan this year is just to figure it out and go have fun with it.

At the Tri-Cities test, you had some problems with the igniters?

The harness. The igniter wiring harness.

OK.

One side was good, one side was bad. We had to go through all the steps to figure that out. We checked, we thought it was the igniters, we checked the battery, we checked the igniter box, we checked the actual igniter. Everything was good, but then we found out that the harness was bad. As soon as we figured that out, we pulled the motor, took everything off of another motor we had in the truck, put it on, and it was fine.

OK.

We fixed it at the shop now, so we're ready to go.

We've pretty-well covered everything. Anything else we should know?

Like I said before, I have personal goals for the boat about what I'd like to see it do and be. I'm not going to put those out there, I'll keep them to myself. I'm pretty confident that we're gonna get to there and...

You'd like to have a chance to drive unlimiteds for a while?

Oh, yeah. Rob is looking toward the future and he wants to keep boat racing around. Right now, it's can we afford to run two boats? It looks great and I hope he gets what he wants out of this so next year, heck yeah, we're gonna do it. But I'm not part of the planning.

It's not your decision.

Right. I want to give him an excitement level that would say yeah, we're gonna do that again next year. That's what I'm going to try and do, so that's what I'm doing.

OK, thanks and good luck. ❖

HydroFile

Race Team News



Lon Erickson

U-1 Jones Racing

Going into the H1 spring testing, Jones Racing named Seph Parshall (right) as the crew chief for the defending national champion team. Seph has been an integral part of the U-9/U-1 team, working closely in the past with Jeff and Mike Campbell. There has been no official announcement to date from owners Mike and Lori Jones on the extent of where the U-1 will compete in this coming season. It is widely known that driver Andrew Tate is also competing in the HRL racing series, however, and has an event the weekend of the H1 Guntersville Hydrofest.



Lon Erickson

U-6 HomeStreet Racing/Miss Madison

Along with other H1 teams, the U-6 is expected in Guntersville and had a successful spring testing. The team dynamics and crew makeup has not been formally named, yet. A good portion of the team from the last few years will return and the Hanson brothers, Mike and Larry, have been heavily involved over the winter in getting the boat prepped for the 2019 season. Along with the primary race boat (Hull #1801, white), there has been a significant amount of attention on the second hull in the Miss Madison team, (Hull #0706, blue) in recent weeks. The second-team hull has been painted all white and has been a frequent topic in information coming from Larry Oberto. No formal announcement has been made regarding the recent work on the #0706 hull.



Miss Madison Racing



Miss Madison Racing



Miss Madison Racing

U-7 Spirit of Detroit Racing

This team was scheduled to test in June at Brockville, Ontario, but windy weather conditions kept them off the water. The Dave Bartush U-7 team is expected to run the full season, according to information relayed by builder / driver Bert Henderson.



Tom Kelly

U-11 Unlimited Racing Group / J&D's presented by Reliable Diamond Tool

After an update to the graphics on the hull and minor repairs coming out of the Tri-Cities spring testing, the U-11 is headed south to begin the 2019 season in Guntersville.



Unlimited Racing Group

U-12 Graham Trucking

With a successful testing session completed, the new look U-12 is on its way to Alabama.



Rob Graham

U-98 Graham Trucking American Dream

After a rocky start at spring testing, things came together for the Rob Graham-owned U-98 *Graham Trucking American Dream* team. As a result of testing and a show of supporting the H1 series, Rob made the decision to head back east with the U-98 so that it will accompany the U-12 in Guntersville and Madison.

U-99.9 Go Fast Turn Left Racing

Limited participation is planned for the 2019 season. Final touches are being completed on the new GFTL hull. During a recent crew weekend, the new race boat was setup and successful trailer firings were completed. The new hull is expected to debut in Tri-Cities carrying the Darrell Strong / Payne West sponsorship. In Seattle it will carry the CARSTAR powered Miss Rock KISW sponsorship colors. The former U-21 hull is decked out in CARSTAR-Miss Rock KISW colors for display opportunities in the Northwest.



Go Fast Turn Left Racing

440 Bucket List Racing

The 440 team suffered the most damage at spring testing, but has rebounded and is ready to go for 2019. Some of the repairs have included a reinforcement to the left sponson air trap, rebuilding a gearbox, and repairs at Whispering Turbines to one of their engines.



Bucket List Racing

My \$0.02 Worth

Editorial Comment



Andy
Muntz

It's sometimes interesting to look at the juxtaposition of history, to consider what world events were happening at the same time as something else significant occurred.

In our world of hydroplane racing, for example, the 1914 Gold Cup was held on Lake George, New York, while Europe was erupting into war. The day after Robert Edgren won the trophy behind the wheel of *Baby Speed Demon II*, Germany declared war against Russia. And, before that trophy could be placed in owner Stuart Blackton's trophy case at Oyster Bay, New York, World War I was underway.

This month, we are considering another juxtaposition of history. All across our television screens this month will be documentaries and other TV programs reminding us that it has been 50 years since Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first humans to set foot upon the Moon. It also happens that

on that same day, the unlimited hydroplanes were competing on the Columbia River at the Tri-Cities, Washington, with the hope of winning the Atomic Cup.

The American space program had already crossed paths with unlimited hydroplane racing. Gus Grissom became the second American to go into space while the boats were qualifying for the 1961 Diamond Cup and Chuck Thompson drove the *Tahoe Miss* to victory in the 1965 Spirit of Detroit Regatta on the same day that Gordon Cooper and Pete Conrad returned to Earth aboard Gemini 5 and set a world endurance record by spending eight days in space.

But, nothing was bigger in the history of spaceflight than the Apollo 11 mission. Sorry hydroplanes, but you had some tough competition that weekend.

On Saturday afternoon, as the boats were qualifying for the

Atomic Cup, while Dean Chenoweth drove the *Myr's Special* to a top qualifying speed of 100.496 mph, most people were instead paying attention to the fact that Armstrong, Aldrin, and Michael Collins were orbiting around the Moon.

Shortly after noon the next day, just as the racing was getting underway with Leif Borgersen's victory in Heat 1A aboard the *Notre Dame*, Armstrong and Aldrin landed on the Moon's surface aboard the lunar module *Eagle*. They at least had the decency to wait until almost 7 p.m., after Chenoweth was presented the winner's trophy, to begin their famous walk on the Moon.

And, there is this: To those of us who were alive at the time and can now gaze to the Moon and remember that day, we will always know for certain what we were doing as Chenoweth celebrated his victory that night. ♦

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Letters may be edited for clarity and space.

PLEASE JOIN US AT THE NEXT MEETING OF UNLIMITEDS UNANIMOUS.

2 p.m. on Sunday, July 14, 2019

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