

MARCH 2021

Strong Racing Team adds another boat and driver.

The newest race team on the H1 Unlimited Racing Series has already made a big impression on the sport by purchasing two of the top boats on the circuit and by enlisting the services of two talented drivers.

In December, Vanessa and Darrell Strong of Pasco, Washington, announced their entry into the sport as owners with their purchase of the U-9 boat from Lori and Mike Jones. They also announced that they had hired Corey Peabody to handle the driving of that boat.

In February, the Strongs made another giant step with their purchase of another top boat, the U-16 that was owned by Erick Ellstrom. They also announced the addition of a second driver to their team: J. Michael Kelly.

Strong started his H1 Unlimited involvement in 2013 by sponsoring the Webster family's U-22, which raced in the Tri-Cities that year and the following two years as *PayneWest Insurance*. He then moved to the Go Fast, Turn Left racing team, sponsoring the U-21 as *PayneWest Insurance* for the Tri-Cities races in 2016 and 2017. He sponsored it at four races during the 2018 campaign.

The race team built a new boat for the 2019 season, which raced as *Darrell Strong presents PayneWest Insurance* at that year's event in the Tri-Cities.

As Lon Erickson reported in the January issue of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*, Strong had been looking to increase his presence in the sport since early fall and finally decided to purchase the U-9 and primary equipment as his best step toward becoming a top contender for 2021 and beyond.

That boat, the oldest on the circuit, was built in 1992 and first saw action as *Coor's Dry*. It won the second race that it entered, which also turned out to be the first race victory for



Vanessa and Darrell Strong

Strong Racing Team

Dave Villwock, who would go on to win more races than any other driver in the sport's history. As for the boat, it has won a total of 12 races during its career, including five during the 2018 season, when Andrew Tate drove it to the national title.

"Vanessa and I are committed to making this new team a benchmark in the sport and we're really excited and gratified

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for this opportunity,” Strong said.

Then came the surprise announcement in early February that the buying spree wasn’t done, that he had also purchased all of the assets of Erick Ellstrom’s race team, which includes the U-16 hull, engines, gearboxes, hauler, and accessory equipment.

The boat was built in 2014 and saw action as *Qatar*, *Ellstrom E-Lam Plus*, and *Oh Boy! Oberto*. It last competed in 2017 and, although the boat hasn’t won any races, it has a reputation as one of the fastest on the H1 Unlimited circuit.

“When I decided to become an owner I set a goal of creating a benchmark team,” Strong said. “This is one more step toward realizing that goal and I’m really pleased with Erick’s enthusiastic support.”

“When Darrell explained his approach to racing and plans for this team, it made sense to help him succeed,” Ell-

strom explained. “I’m excited and looking forward to Strong Racing’s impact on the sport.”

In conjunction with the boat purchase in December, the team also announced that Corey Peabody had signed on as the driver. Peabody drove *Spirit of Detroit* in 2016 and *Graham Trucking American Dream* in 2019.

Then, two days after announcing the purchase of the Ellstrom boat, they issued a statement saying they had hired J. Michael Kelly to join the team.

Kelly was Rookie of the Year in 2004 and during his 16-year career, has collected a total of 11 race victories, largely at the wheel of *Graham Trucking* as it was owned by both Ted Porter and Rob Graham. In 2019, he won the last three events of the season.

“We are thrilled to have JMK on the team,” Strong said. “He is definitely one of the best drivers in the sport and

we feel he makes us very competitive in 2021. Also, Mike, Angela, and their boys have become like family to us, so we are excited to have them join the Strong Racing team.”

“I would like to thank Darrell and Vanessa for the amazing opportunity to drive one of the fastest boats in H1,” Kelly said. “I believe we will build a successful team and I look forward to our future of racing and helping the sport.”

The Strong Racing team says the former Ellstrom boat will have the U-8 designation, while the U-9 will continue to carry its current number. Sponsorship arrangements for the two boats are reportedly in the works, but the team plans to race both in all 2021 H1 Unlimited Racing Series events. ❖

COMMENTS FROM H1

Jan Shaw, Director of Operations



We extend our sincere thanks to Mike Jones and Doug Southern for all of their time and efforts serving on the Board of Directors. Both decided not to run for re-election to their board positions. On January 10, the H1 Unlimited Board of Directors elected Tim Austin and Kelly Stocklin to new two-year terms (2021-2022) on the board and elected Andy Muntz to serve the remainder of a vacant position to serve through the end of 2021. The board now includes Shannon Raney, Michael Mc Morrow, and Andy Muntz with one year remaining on their terms, and Tim Austin and Kelly Stocklin with two years.

At the January 31 board meeting, Tim Austin was elected to serve as chairman of the board, Andy Muntz as secretary, and Steve Bass was named treasurer. Please welcome the newcomers.

The mailing address for H1 Unlimited (American Boat Racing Association) has changed to: H1 Unlimited, P.O. Box 53050, Bellevue, WA 98015-3050.

H1 currently has six boats registered for the 2021 season. Sharon and Kelly Stocklin have two (U-440 and U-21), Vanessa and Darrell Strong have two (U-8 and U-9), Shannon and Scott Raney have one (U-11), and Rob Graham has one (U-12).

The 2021 season has Guntersville, Alabama, on the schedule for June 25–27. Please see their Facebook page and their website. Romesberg Media has rolled out the event’s marketing piece and hotels need to be reserved now. Race teams planning to compete in Guntersville need to pay their registration now; as registration fees will not be taken out of the race tow money.

As for the other race sites, because of uncertainties about where things will stand with Covid this summer, they and we have not yet made any commitments. We understand the difficult situation our race sites are in, and expect to know more about their status within the next couple of months. H1 has also not yet awarded the Gold Cup for 2021.

Andy Muntz is busy devising H1 Unlimited’s public relations plan. It will look at our H1 family, devoted fans, the media, and our potential young fans. We are also putting together an H1 membership plan for our fans that will feature an item only a member will receive.

Let’s get these teams together and create “The Greatest Show on H-2-0.” ❖

IT'S IN THE FAMILY

In part one of this series, we looked at owners who started in unlimited hydroplane racing and then encouraged family members to join the fun. In part two, the focus was on drivers who brought family members into the roostertail rivalry. In part three we will examine individuals who entered unlimited racing in other roles, such as boat designers and builders, crew members, sponsors, and in a variety of administrative positions. The list can be quite lengthy, so rather than trying to document everyone's complete story, we'll hit the highlights and acknowledge the contributions of as many families as possible.

VARIOUS POSITIONS:

BY CRAIG FJARLIE

Designers/Builders:

The Ventnor Boat Works was founded in 1902 by Adolph Apel. His son, Arno, became a vital part of the company. One of Ventnor's most famous boats was *Juno*, built in 1937.

Following World War II, Norman Lauterbach worked for Ventnor as the

company's construction manager. He drove *Lahala* in the 1948 Gold Cup and built *Hot Metal* and *Aluminum First* for Henry Kaiser in 1949. Norm's brother, Henry, became a respected boat builder in his own right. Among his Unlimited creations was *Miss Chrysler Crew* for Bill Sterett. Henry never drove an Unlimited, but his son Larry took the wheel of boats such as *Appian Jeronimo* and *Cellular One*,

in addition to his boat building duties.

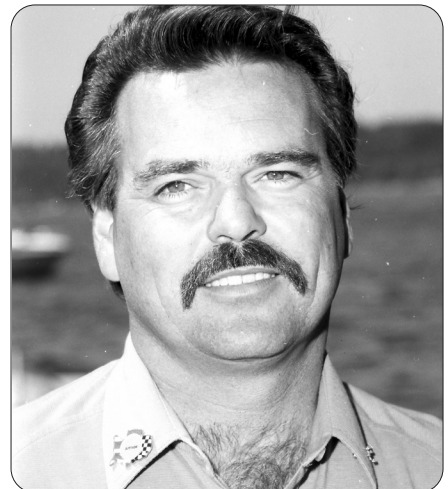
Ted Jones was a successful designer and builder of limited-class hydroplanes when Stan Sayres contracted with him to create *Slo-mo-shun IV*. Jones drove the craft to victory in the 1950 Gold Cup and drove it again in 1951. He went on to create a number of successful Unlimteds: *Miss Thriftway* and *Miss Bardahl* among them.



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

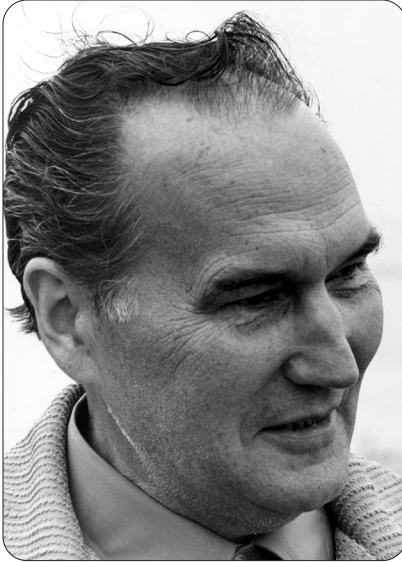


Karl Pearson



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

The family tradition of designing Unlimited hydroplanes. From the left, Ted Jones, Ron Jones, and Ron Jones, Jr.



Les Staudacher

His son, Ron Jones, also designed and built winning boats, including *Pay 'n Pak*, *Miss Budweiser*, and *Miss U.S.* Ron Jones, Jr., continued the family legacy with boats such as the multi-wing *Coors Dry*, which he also owned.

Detroit-based Les Staudacher built a number of boats in the 1950s and '60s, including most of the *Gale* hulls, *Miss U.S. I*, and *My Gypsy*. His son, Jon Staudacher, built the 1975 *Atlas Van Lines* and *Miss Renault*, among others.

Don Kelson owned Modern Pattern Works, where he built inboard hydroplanes and helped with repairs on Unlimiteds. His son, Eddie, worked on the crew of *Hallmark Homes*. Kelson built the second *Hallmark Homes* in 1971, after the first one was wrecked.

John Walters had his first involvement with Unlimiteds working for Ron Jones Marine in Costa Mesa, California. He later served on the crews of *Red Man*, *Miss Vernors*, and *Atlas Van Lines*, before being named the driver of the turbine-powered *Pay 'n Pak*. His brother, Gary, worked on the *Pak* crew.

Crew members:

Burns Smith began working on Unlimiteds in early 1956 when he helped repair the former *Slo-mo-*

shun V from its flip. He was on the crew of *Miss Seattle*, *Hawaii Ka'i III*, and others before finishing his career with Bernie Little's *Miss Budweiser* team. His sons, Dixon and David, worked on a number of boats including *Miss Bardahl*. Dixon currently owns the 1962 *Miss Bardahl* and runs it at various vintage events.

Jerry Stiles was on the crew of *Maverick*. He was away from Unlimited racing for a number of years until his son Clay purchased the former "bubble" *Miss Budweiser*. The boat bore several names, including *Miss Ginger Honey*. Jerry helped on the crew, but they had little success.

Ed Cooper, Sr., known to his friends as "Cousin Ed," was on the crew of *Miss Madison* for a number of years. In 1986, he and his son Ed Cooper, Jr., put their own team together when they purchased the former *Tempus* from Chuck Hickling. They bought a new boat in 1988 and won the Tri-Cities race the following year. Their third boat won the Gold Cup in 2003, with the name *Fox Hills Chrysler Jeep*.

The family's involvement with Unlimiteds includes a third generation; Eddie Cooper has worked on the crew for many years. Their success has come using a turbocharged Allison engine.



Dixon Smith

Pete LaRock worked on Bob Giliam's crew in 1972. He set up his own team in 1973 with the former *Breathless II*. The boat carried names including *Shakey's Special* and *Sunny Jim*. LaRock bought the former *U-95* in 1975, converted it to Rolls Merlin power, and changed the number to *U-96*. His brother, Larry, worked on the crew.

Kelly Stocklin was on the crew of *The Squire Shop* and later worked in the shop for the *Miss Budweiser* organization. He



Kelly Stocklin



Scott and Shannon Raney

worked with Dave Villwock and became an expert on propeller technology, making propellers for a number of teams. Stocklin became an owner and driver in 2012 with Bucket List Racing and drove Fred Leland's *Central Coast Airbrush* in 2013. Stocklin and his wife, Sharon, continue as owners of the 440 *Bucket List Racing* and their new acquisition U-99.9 the former *Carstar/Miss Rock*.

Scott Raney was on Bill Wurster's *Llumar* crew for several years and became crew chief in 2003. Dave Holey, his sponsor with Peters & May, urged Raney to start his own team in 2011. Scott and his wife, Shannon, bought Ken Muscatel's boat and have been regulars on the circuit since that time. Shannon has done administrative work for H1 and their daughter Emily has helped with pit credentials and other duties.

Ray LaBrie and his son Jimmy served on the crew of U-100 *American Pride*. Brooke Tyler III, his wife, Rita, and their son Brooke Tyler IV, spent time working on Jim Harvey's *Trendwest* team.

David and Dan Heye were an integral part of the championship *Miss E-Lam Plus* crew. Currently they are working on restoration of *The Squire Shop* at the Hydroplane and Race Boat Museum. Mike and Jeff Campbell spent several seasons working for Mike and Lori Jones on their

U-9 *Delta Realtrac*, picking up a national point title in 2018.

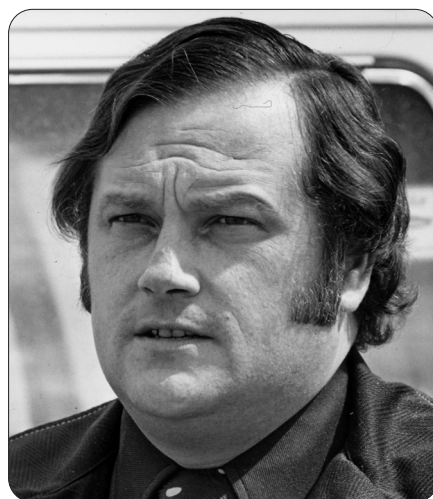
Officials, Sponsors, and Administrative Positions:

Harry Woods was a referee at many races in the western United States in the 1950s and '60s. His wife, Lucille, was a scorer and worked with him on the official tower.

Ole Bardahl, who would become a major power in Unlimited racing, made his entry into the sport as sponsor of Norm Christiansen's U-4 in 1957. The following year Bardahl had his own boat and his team won numerous races,



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



Jim Dunn

Doug McIntosh

including the Gold Cup five times. His daughter, Evelyn, married Rex Manchester, who drove *Miss Spokane*, *\$ Bill*, and *Notre Dame*. Their son Mark worked as a crewmember on boats his father drove.

Phil Cole handled public relations for the Unlimited Racing Commission (URC) for many years. His wife, Claudia, took care of administrative duties. After Phil retired, their son Sam did public relations and promotion for the Unlimiteds. Sam's brother Dan works with the Madison Regatta and served as the race director a few years ago.

Doug McIntosh was the sponsor representative for Sunny Jim when the company entered hydroplane racing in 1973. McIntosh was bitten by the bug



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Harry and Lucille Wood



Larry (left) and Art Oberto

and put together his own team in 1976, with a boat he called *Vagabond*, the former *Tahoe Miss*. His son Scott was a crewmember on the boat and was a skilled mechanic on Allison engines. McIntosh's other son Mike was a crewmember on various boats, including *Miss Budweiser*.

Wilbur and Mary Heitz served as official timers for the URC for a number of years. Wilbur was known to his friends as Wib.

Patti Martin, a nurse, worked in URC medical. She later married Bo Darling, who worked in administrative positions while she continued to contribute her skills to the sport's medical needs.

The Oberto company stepped into Unlimited racing in 1975 and Art Oberto has been a regular sponsor since then. Some of the company's greatest success came when it sponsored Madison's U-6 as *Oh Boy! Oberto*. In the early years, Art's wife, Dorothy, would prepare lunch for crewmembers. Following Art's retirement from the company, his son Larry took over as sponsor representative.

Mark Allen was race director of Seattle's Seafair regatta two years in a row. His wife, Nancy, coordinated television and radio production for the race. Mark also did media work at West Coast races.

Jack Love was commodore of the Spirit of Detroit Association for a num-

ber of years. His son John was associated with *Miss U.S.* when it won the Gold Cup in 1976, and later helped with public relations for Fran Muncey's *Miller American* when Chip Hanauer was the driver.

Ralph Lewis conducted a demographic survey about hydroplane racing, then helped with media relations and served as dock master. Merry Beth Lewis also handled media relations and performed administrative duties when Bill Doner was in charge of the sport.

Sven Ellstrom made his foray into Unlimited racing in 1994 as sponsor of the unusual four-point boat owned by Glen Davis. The next year, Ellstrom had his own boat, U-16 *Miss E-Lam Plus*. A few years later, with Dave Villwock in the cockpit, Ellstrom's team became a consistent winner. Erick Ellstrom took over operation of the team when his father's health failed.

Darrell Strong has sponsored boats since 2013, when Webster's U-22 carried the name *PayneWest Insurance*. In 2015, his association changed to Greg O'Farrell's Go Fast Turn Left team. This past December, Darrell and Vanessa Strong purchased the U-9 from Mike and Lori Jones. Then, on February 1 of this year, they added the Ellstrom inventory to their fleet.

Howard and Jan Shaw have a long

history of involvement with boat racing, primarily in outboards. Recently, Howard has served as assistant referee and Jan is currently director of operations for H1 Unlimited.

It should be obvious from the information on which this series has shed light that unlimited hydroplane racing can be a family activity. Opportunities abound for involvement.

Of course, there's no requirement that participants bring family members into racing. Those who do, however, will have enjoyment and memories to share with each other. Truly, racing can be a common bond.

Before we wrap up the series, there are some people we missed in part one and we want to set the record straight.

When Steve Woomer died, Kim Gregory purchased the former *Smokin' Joe's* from his estate in 1998. Gregory's team was known at USA Racing. The first year, the boat carried the name *Wildfire* and Mark Weber drove it to victory in Hawaii. Following the *Miss Budweiser* team's departure from Unlimited racing, Gregory purchased much of their assets, including the T-3 hull. Nate Brown drove *Miss NYC* to victory in the 2004 Gold Cup race.

Kim Gregory's wife, Debbie, was an integral part of the operation of the team and kept the boat on the water following Kim's passing. Their sons Matt and Adam were co-crew chiefs, and daughter Kari did public relations.

Someone else we inadvertently overlooked was Kasey, the daughter of Mike and Lori Jones. During the early years of the U-9 team, she helped on the crew.

It's a virtual certainty that other families have been missed. Readers who can think of someone we left out are welcome to help set the record straight. After all, the purpose of this series was to document that it's all in the family. ♦

A record-keeping conundrum: Which hydroplane finished the most consecutive heats?

BY ANDY MUNTZ

The numbers don't lie, we've often been told. Doing that telling, of course, are those among us who see the world as black or white, as either it is or it isn't, and as things that work or don't. They are those who will admonish us to look at the data for the answer.

But there are others among us who see the world differently. They sometimes see gray. They know that there can be nuances in data—exceptions, anomalies, misinterpretations.

In the effort to assemble hydroplane data, one discovers that these two world views will sometimes collide. Take, for example, what happens when compiling the statistic for boats that have finished the most consecutive heats. Should be pretty cut and dry, you might say. The boat either finishes or it doesn't—right?

Well, maybe not.

When the crankshaft on the *Miss Century 21* snapped during the first heat of the 1962 Harrah's Tahoe Trophy in Stateline, Nevada, it ended a streak of

55 consecutive heat finishes by the team. (The achievement was reported as 56 heats at the time, but the record was later corrected to 55.)

The team's streak of consecutive finishes spanned almost three complete seasons, having started with the first heat of the 1960 campaign in Chelan, Washington, and completely shattered the existing record—a string of 19 straight heat finishes turned in by Bud Saile's *Miss Wayne* in 1953 and '54.

The achievement of the *Miss Century 21* that year also brought some attention to crew chief Jack Ramsey, a quiet man who typically avoided publicity. Ironically, on the evening before the streak ended, the *Seattle Times* published a feature about Ramsey, not only because of the consecutive-heat-finish run but because the boat, driven by Bill Muncey, had also won every heat that it had entered up to that point in the season.

"Our job, as crew, is to keep on top of the equipment," he told the reporter. "The rest is strictly driving." But, he admitted, the streak of finished heats was putting growing pressure on the crew. "Each race gets tougher. The boat has to quit sometime. We only hope it does because Bill turns off the key."

Then, the crankshaft broke.

What Ramsey, Muncey, and the other members of their team couldn't know was that *Miss Bardahl*, the winner of that 1962 Harrah's Tahoe Trophy event on



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

The *Miss Century 21* racing team in 1962, the year they set the mark.



The crew launches *Miss Bardahl* at the 1965 Gold Cup in Seattle.

The string of 57 consecutive heat finishes by *Miss Bardahl* from 1963 through 1965 stood as the standard for the sport until 1997.

Lake Tahoe, would start its own string of consecutive heat finishes early the following season. That run would reach its conclusion during the boat's final appearance: the 1965 San Diego Cup.

With a victory in the event's first heat, driver Ron Musson and *Miss Bardahl* had apparently tied the consecutive-heat-finish record set by *Miss Century 21* three years earlier, then went on to win two more heats and the race trophy, bringing the tally of finishes to 57 straight heats.

The achievement was mentioned in magazine and newspaper reports of the San Diego race, was cited when crew chief Leo Vanden Berg later received the Master of Mechanics Award, and has been widely referenced in many other sources, including Jon Osterberg's book *Dragon Days* and earlier issues of this publication.

Miss Bardahl's achievement would stand for another 32 years—or, did it?

Perhaps no other sport takes its statistics as seriously as baseball. The sport lives by its records—providing a way to compare any player in history with any other—and the records are so complete they seem to account for everything. If someone were to ask how many left-handed batters hit three doubles during a game on a Friday night, the answer could likely be found.

The keeping of baseball records is so meticulous and has become such an important part of baseball lore that the discovery of a simple over-

sight many years later can throw everything into a tailspin. For instance, take the case of Ty Cobb.

For many years it was assumed that Cobb held the record for most consecutive years with the highest batting average in the American League—a string of nine seasons from 1907 to 1915. But serious sleuthing by baseball statisticians in the 1970s uncovered something that changed that legacy.

Cobb's Detroit Tigers played a double-header against the Boston Red Sox on September 24, 1910, but the date on the score sheet for the sec-



Ty Cobb of the Detroit Tigers

ond game was incorrectly written down as September 25. When the lack of stats for the second game was later discovered, the “missing” numbers were re-entered—thus double-counting them. And, the statistics from that double-counted game were then used to calculate Ty Cobb’s batting average.

The error was actually discovered after the season had ended and was supposedly fixed by crossing out the results from that fictitious September 25 game. But the sleuths discovered that wasn’t quite true. The stats were crossed out for everybody—except Cobb.

You see, when Cobb’s batting average was calculated without the double-counted stats, his batting average for the season ended up being .383. That would have meant that the American League batting champion for 1910 was actually Nap Lajoie of the Cleveland Indians, who had an average of .384.

It’s likely someone knew this when the 1910 season had ended, but apparently decided to avoid the ramifications of making that change. Best to look the other way, leave it alone, and avoid the embarrassment, that person surely felt. Besides, who would ever know?

A simple change in the wording of rules also can have an impact on statistics that reaches back many years.

In 1991, the Committee for Statistical Accuracy for Major League Baseball defined what a pitcher had to accomplish in order to be credited with a no-hitter. A no-hitter was, according to the ruling, “when a pitcher (or pitchers) allows no hits during the entire course of a game, which consists of at least nine innings.”

As a result, there can’t be a no-hitter if a game is shortened to fewer than nine innings because of weather, if the “entire course of the game” goes beyond nine innings and the pitcher gives up a hit during those extra innings, or if the pitcher is on the visiting team and the home team doesn’t bat in the bottom of the ninth inning because it is ahead.

According to Bill Frances of the

Baseball Hall of Fame, this simple change in definition eliminated 50 no-hitters from baseball’s record book. Included was a game pitched by Harvey Haddix of the Pittsburgh Pirates, who threw 12 innings against the Milwaukee Braves on May 26, 1959, without giving up a hit, but allowed Joe Adcock to hit an RBI double in the 13th inning.

When Haddix was asked about the removal of that no-hitter from his record, he said it didn’t bother him that much. “It was really not a no-hitter,” he said.

The string of 57 consecutive heat finishes by *Miss Bardahl* from 1963 through 1965 stood as the standard for the sport until 1997, when Jim Harvey’s U-2 *Primestar* finished third in Heat 3A of the Virginia is for Lover’s Cup in Norfolk, Virginia. Steve David then piloted the boat to another three heat finishes until, as *Gargoyles*, it failed to start Heat 3A at the Columbia Cup, ending the streak at 61 consecutive heat finishes.

The transition from internal-combustion engines to turbines had a dramatic impact on the reliability of Unlimited hydros, to the point that the

accomplishment of *Miss Bardahl* has since fallen well down the list of consecutive-heat finishers.

After Harvey’s boat set its standard in 1997, the next to take the lead position was the *Miss Budweiser*, and it did so in a fashion that greatly exceeded the record. The *Budweiser* that was built in 1997 (known as the T-5) started a string of heat finishes in 1998 that didn’t end until five seasons later when the boat failed to start the final heat of the 2003 Thunder on the Ohio event in Evansville, Indiana. It was a total of 99 consecutive heat finishes, an accomplishment that still stands as the best in the sport’s history.

After the death of Bernie Little and the end of the Budweiser sponsorship, the boat was sold to Ted Porter and collected another 96 consecutive heat finishes as U-7 *Graham Trucking* from 2009–2011 and U-7 *Graham Trucking II* from 2014–2015 (it was idle in 2012 and 2013), giving the hull the distinction of being both first and second on the list of hydros with the longest string of heat finishes.

In third place with 80 consecutive heat finishes is the boat that saw action



Jim Harvey’s U-2 *Primestar* (shown here in Madison, Indiana) broke *Miss Bardahl*’s mark for consecutive heat finishes during the 1997 season.

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

as *Oberto* and *Miss HomeStreet* from 2015 to 2017. The same hull finished in fourth place when it completed 62 consecutive heat finishes from 2007 to 2009 as *Oh Boy! Oberto*.

As for *Miss Bardahl*, its accomplishment now stands in eighth place—perhaps.

You may have surmised that, like Ty Cobb's batting average in 1910, there is now a question about the boat's string of 57 consecutive heat finishes. That run of finishes started with three checkered flags at both the 1963 Seafair Trophy and that season's Indiana Governor's Cup. Then, in what would be the seventh in that string of 57, there was a problem.

At the 1963 President's Cup, driver Don Wilson cut inside the exit pin on his way to the start of Heat 1B. The boat completed the heat but was later disqualified for the illegal start. Shortly thereafter, a heavy rain arrived and wiped out the rest of the event, but it was declared a completed race and *Miss Exide* was awarded the trophy.

So, the question is: Does a race team get credit for a completed heat if it is disqualified from that heat?

Some may argue that following the rules is an important component for successfully completing a heat and if there's



F. Pierce Williams



Chris Denslow

TOP: The record for the most consecutive heats finished is held by the *Miss Budweiser*, which set the mark in 2003 after finishing a total of 99 consecutive heats, a string that took six seasons to complete.
ABOVE: That same hull was later sold to Ted Porter and started another string of consecutive finishes that totaled 96 heats. It stands as the second-best in history.



Chris Denslow

From 2007 to 2009, *Oh Boy! Oberto* finished 62 consecutive heats, the fourth best in the sport's history.

a disqualification, it should therefore interrupt the boat's string of competed heats. Others may argue that the record for consecutive heat finishes is a measure of a boat crew's success and, if the boat finishes the heat, it should count whether or not the driver does something to cause a disqualification.

It's this final argument that apparently won the day when, sometime in 1965, officials from the Unlimited Racing Commission looked back at the string of 57 consecutive heats by *Bardahl* and decided the heat at the 1963 President's Cup should not interrupt the string.

In the scheme of things, the result

doesn't make that big of a difference. The reliability of modern hydros is such that if *Bardahl* is credited with 57 straight heats it ends up just eighth on the overall list, but still the most successful of boats powered by internal-combustion engines. If that heat at the 1963 President's Cup would be judged as an interruption to the string of heat finishes, *Bardahl* would end up with 51 and would be tied with the 2014–16 *Graham Trucking* in 10th place.

What do you think? ❖

THE 2021 HYDRO RECORD BOOK

Last year, we introduced something new, the publication of an annual Record Book to serve as a free reference for those who enjoy keeping track of all things Unlimited hydro racing. Now, it's back!

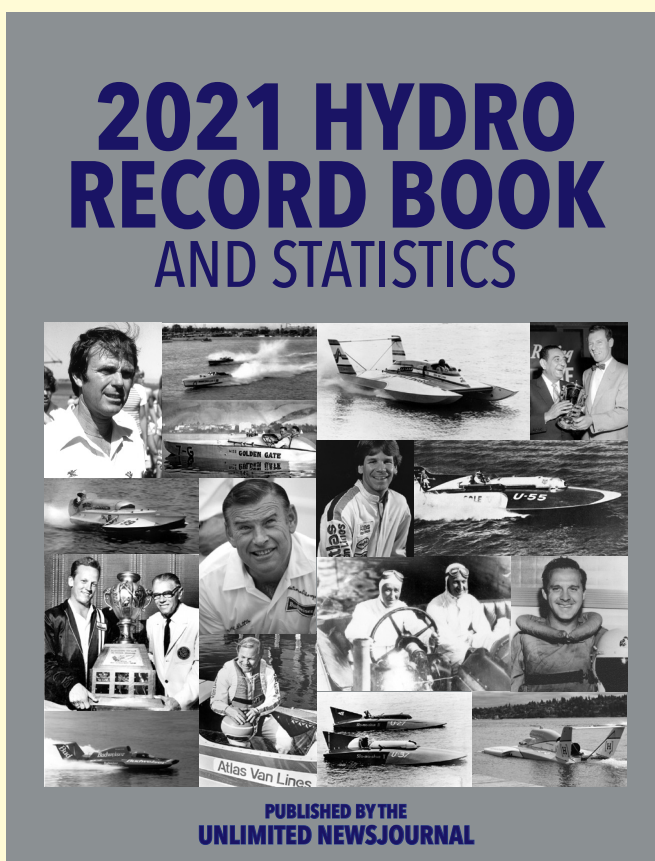
Nothing happened on Unlimited racecourses last year, so you may ask: Why would it be necessary to produce another issue of the Record Book? The records would all be the same, right?

The answer is, after doing the book last year, we found a few things that needed to be corrected and we wanted to make some tweaks to improve it. But, the basic idea is the same.

It's our modern version of the old media guides that Fred Farley and the Unlimited Racing Commission used to put together some 40 years ago. It's a place where the various achievements within the sport of unlimited hydroplane racing have been recorded.

Although the Record Book includes the results of Gold Cups and Harmsworth races since their first runnings, it also compiles the results of every official race held since 1922, when the Gold Cup class was established. (As it explains in the book, an "official race" is one where there are at least three starters and at least two heats of racing.)

One difference this year is that we've attempted to separate records from statistics. A record is an achievement that is officially recognized. In almost all cases, the driver or owner will receive a trophy or certificate indicating that the race was won or a speed record established. A statistic is an unofficial achievement. The statistical rankings in the Record Book were developed through the analysis of heat results and other statistical data.



The 2021 Hydro Record Book contains the same records and statistics as last year's version, although maybe arranged differently, but a few categories have been added. Most of these are in the area of statistics. The new listings in the 2021 Record Book are as follows:

- ◆ The driver of the greatest number of different hulls.
- ◆ The drivers who have entered the most races.
- ◆ The drivers with the best percentage of races won vs. races entered.
- ◆ Drivers with the most heat victories.
- ◆ Drivers with the most consecutive heat victories.
- ◆ Drivers with the best percentage of heat wins vs. heats finished.
- ◆ Race teams with the most appearances.

THE HYDRO RECORD BOOK IS **FREE!** HERE'S HOW TO GET A COPY

If you've got a question about hydroplane records or are just curious about the sport's history, you can likely get the answer by using the 2021 version of the Hydro Record Book. It's available for free on the Unlimited NewsJournal website, which you can find at unlimitednewsjournal.net. You can just read it there, bookmark it, download it to your computer, or print your own copy.

- ◆ Race teams that have won the most heats.
- ◆ Race teams that have had the most consecutive heat victories.
- ◆ Race teams with the most consecutive heat finishes.
- ◆ Race teams with the best percentage

of heat wins vs. heats finished.

- ◆ Race teams with the best percentage of heats finished vs. heats entered.

We hope you'll find the new updated 39-page 2021 Hydro Record Book to be useful. Here are a few samples of what you'll find inside:

MOST CONSECUTIVE HEAT FINISHES BY A RACE TEAM:

1. Miss Budweiser (1998-03).....99	11. Graham Trucking (2014-16).....51	Oh Boy! Oberto (2009-11).....36
2. Graham Trucking II (2009-15).....96	12. Miss Madison (1996-98).....43	22. Miss Budweiser (1976-78).....35
3. Miss HomeStreet (2015-17).....80	Miss Bello's Pizza (2001-03).....43	Kellogg's Frosted Flakes (1993).....35
4. Oh Boy! Oberto (2007-09).....62	Miss Budweiser (1997-99).....43	Delta Realtrac (2016-17).....35
5. Gargoyles (1995-97).....61	15. Delta Realtrac (2017-19).....42	Graham Trucking (2015-16).....35
6. Oh Boy! Oberto (2011-13).....59	16. Smokin' Joe's (1994-95).....41	All Access Equipment (2015-16).....35
7. Formula (2007-09).....58	17. Miss Madison (1963-65).....39	27. Stihl (1995-97).....34
8. Miss Bardahl (1963-65).....57	18. Oh Boy! Oberto (2000-01).....38	28. Formula (1995-97).....33
9. Miss Century 21 (1960-62).....55	Miss Budweiser (2000-03).....38	29. Miss Budweiser (1980-81).....32
10. Qatar (2012-14).....53	20. Ellstrom (2004-05).....36	DeWalt Tools (1996).....32

The name listed is the name the boat used when the last consecutive heat finish was scored.

MOST CONSECUTIVE HEAT VICTORIES BY A RACE TEAM:

1. Miss Budweiser (1980).....20	Ellstrom (2008-09).....11	Atlas Van Lines (1976).....9
2. Miss Pepsi (1952).....17	Spirit of Qatar (2011).....11	Atlas Van Lines (1978-79).....9
Miss HomeStreet (2015-16).....17	Miss HomeStreet (2019).....11	Miller High Life (1987-88).....9
4. Miss Budweiser (1994).....16	14. Pay 'n Pak (1974).....10	Miss Circus Circus (1990).....9
5. Miss Century 21 (1962).....15	Miller American (1985).....10	Miss Budweiser (1988).....9
6. Miss Budweiser (1997).....12	Miss Budweiser (1992).....10	Miss Budweiser (1993).....9
Ellstrom (2007).....12	PICO American Dream (1997).....10	Miss Budweiser (1998).....9
8. Miss Budweiser (1981).....11	Miss Budweiser (1999).....10	
Miss Budweiser (1992-93).....11	Ellstrom (2005-06).....10	
Miss Budweiser (1998-99).....11	20. Atlas Van Lines (1972).....9	

The name listed is the name the boat used when the last consecutive heat victory was scored.

DRIVERS WITH THE MOST RACE VICTORIES:

1. Dave Villwock.....67	Jack Regas.....9	George Woods, Jr.3
2. Bill Muncey.....62	25. Dan Arena.....8	Howie Bennis.....3
3. Chip Hanauer.....61	26. Lee Schoenith.....7	Jeff Bernard.....3
4. Dean Chenoweth.....25	Scott Pierce.....7	Steve Reynolds.....3
5. Jim Kropfeld.....22	28. Bill Brow.....6	Terry Troxell.....3
Bill Cantrell.....22	Bill Sterett.....6	52. Bill Horn.....2
7. Jimmy Shane.....19	Don Wilson.....6	George Townsend.....2
8. Steve David.....18	Jean Theoret.....6	Frederick Burnham.....2
9. Billy Schumacher.....17	Lou Fageol.....6	Harold Wilson.....2
10. Danny Foster.....16	Warner Gardner.....6	Harry Lynn.....2
Ron Musson.....16	Marion Cooper.....6	Jack Bartlow.....2
Tom D'Eath.....16	35. Guy Lombardo.....5	Jim McCormick.....2
13. Chuck Thompson.....15	Vic Kliesrath.....5	Mark Weber.....2
14. George Henley.....12	Jonathan Wainwright.....5	Richard Hoyt.....2
Mark Tate.....12	Nate Brown.....5	Ron Snyder.....2
Gar Wood.....12	Stan Dollar.....5	Russ Schleeh.....2
17. J. Michael Kelly.....11	40. Fred Alter.....4	Tommy Fults.....2
Mickey Remund.....11	J.W. Whitlock.....4	Tommy Sopwith.....2
19. Mark Evans.....10	Mike Hanson.....4	Walt Kade.....2
Mira Slovak.....10	Mitch Evans.....4	A.J. McGrete.....2
21. Andrew Tate.....9	44. Bob Hayward.....3	Mel Crook.....2
Bill Stead.....9	Caleb Bragg.....3	Fred Blossom.....2
George Reis.....9	Clell Perry.....3	

DRIVERS WITH THE MOST NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS:

1. Dave Villwock.....10	8. Billy Schumacher.....3	Jack Rutherford.....2
2. Bill Muncey.....7	Jim Kropfeld.....3	George Townsend.....2
Chip Hanauer.....7	Lee Schoenith.....3	Mickey Remund.....2
4. Jimmy Shane.....6	Bill Cantrell.....3	Mira Slovak.....2
Steve David.....6	Vic Kliesrath.....3	Ron Musson.....2
6. Dean Chenoweth.....4	13. Chuck Thompson.....2	Dan Arena.....2
Mark Tate.....4	Danny Foster.....2	

THE MOST RACES ENTERED BY A DRIVER:

1. Bill Muncey.....194	18. J. Michael Kelly.....83	Warner Gardner.....56
2. Steve David.....183	19. Jimmy King.....80	36. Mickey Remund.....54
3. Chip Hanauer.....158	20. Tom D'Eath.....78	37. Jimmy Shane.....52
4. Mitch Evans.....145	21. Nate Brown.....77	38. Norm Evans.....52
5. Dave Villwock.....140	22. Dean Chenoweth.....76	39. Brian Perkins.....51
6. Ken Muscatel.....126	23. Billy Schumacher.....71	40. Danny Foster.....50
7. Mike Hanson.....124	Milner Irvin.....71	41. Mark Weber.....49
8. Bill Cantrell.....118	25. Jim McCormick.....70	42. Lee Schoenith.....48
9. Mark Evans.....109	Walt Kade.....70	43. Jeff Bernard.....47
10. Fred Alter.....101	27. Jim Kropfeld.....69	Ron Musson.....47
11. Greg Hopp.....97	28. Bob Miller.....68	45. Mike Weber.....46
12. Mark Tate.....94	29. Todd Yarling.....63	46. Don Wilson.....45
13. Scott Pierce.....93	30. Steve Reynolds.....59	Mira Slovak.....45
14. Chuck Thompson.....91	31. Jack Schafer, Jr.58	48. Frank Saile.....44
15. Jerry Hopp.....90	32. Bob Schroeder.....57	49. Bill Brow.....38
16. Bob Gilliam.....86	George Woods, Jr.57	George Johnson.....38
17. Ron Snyder.....85	34. Chuck Hickling.....56	Tom Thompson.....38

DRIVERS WITH THE MOST HEAT VICTORIES:

1. Dave Villwock.....340	18. Scott Pierce.....48	35. Ron Snyder.....25
2. Chip Hanauer.....270	19. Nate Brown.....47	36. Don Wilson.....28
3. Bill Muncey.....234	20. Andrew Tate.....46	Greg Hopp.....28
4. Steve David.....151	21. Jean Theoret.....44	38. Bill Brow.....27
5. Jimmy Shane.....131	22. Mira Slovak.....43	Bill Stead.....27
6. Mark Tate.....128	23. Danny Foster.....42	Milner Irvin.....27
7. Dean Chenoweth.....113	24. George Henley.....38	41. Guy Lombardo.....26
8. Jim Kropfeld.....92	Steve Reynolds.....38	42. J.W. Myers.....24
9. Mark Evans.....84	26. Jeff Bernard.....36	43. Jim McCormick.....23
10. Tom D'Eath.....81	Mitch Evans.....36	Leif Borgersen.....23
11. Chuck Thompson.....79	28. Jack Regas.....35	45. Ken Muscatel19.....19
12. Billy Schumacher.....77	Mark Weber.....35	Lou Fageol.....19
13. J. Michael Kelly.....72	30. Fred Alter.....34	47. Lee Schoenith.....18
14. Mike Hanson.....69	31. Jimmy King.....33	48. Kip Brown.....17
15. Bill Cantrell.....66	32. Bill Sterett.....31	Mike Weber.....17
16. Mickey Remund.....63	George Woods, Jr.....31	Tommy Fults.....17
17. Ron Musson.....61	Warner Gardner.....31	

THE MOST RACE VICTORIES BY AN OWNER:

1. Bernie Little.....136	19. Guy Lombardo.....10	Leslie Rosenberg.....4
2. Miss Madison, Inc.....34	William Bennett.....10	Rob Graham.....4
3. Bill Muncey.....29	21. George Reis.....9	Stan Dollar.....4
Joe Schoenith.....29	Jack Schafer.....9	Dan Arena.....4
5. Erick Ellstrom.....28	23. Bill Harrah.....8	41. Albin Fallon.....3
6. Ole Bardahl.....27	Bill Wurster.....8	Bill Boeing.....3
7. Dave Heerensperger.....25	Edgar Kaiser.....8	Bill Cantrell.....3
8. Fran Muncey.....24	26. Stan Sayres.....7	Chuck Thompson.....3
9. Ted Porter.....18	27. Bob Steil.....6	Harry Lynn.....3
Willard Rhodes.....18	28. Herb Mendelson.....5	Jack Williams.....3
11. Fred Leland.....17	Jim Harvey.....5	Jim Herrington.....3
12. Horace Dodge.....15	Joe Little.....5	Jonathan Wainwright.....3
Steve Woomer.....15	j. Gordon Thompson.....5	Marion Cooper.....3
14. Dossin Brothers.....12	Milo and Glen Stoen.....5	Phil Ewald.....3
George Simon.....12	Vic Kliesrath.....5	
Gar Wood.....12	34. Billy Schumacher.....4	
17. William Waggoner.....11	Ed Cooper.....4	
Mike and Lori Jones.....11	J.W. Whitlock.....4	

OWNERS WITH THE MOST NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS:

1. Bernie Little.....23	Dossin Brothers.....3	13. George Reis.....2
2. Miss Madison, Inc.....9	Vic Kliesrath.....3	Herb Mendelson.....2
3. Ole Bardahl.....6	Erick Ellstrom.....3	Ted Porter.....2
4. Joe Schoenith.....4	Fran Muncey.....3	William Waggoner.....2
5. Bill Muncey.....3	Willard Rhodes.....3	
Dave Heerensperger.....3	Horace Dodge.....3	

STANDING ALL-TIME COMPETITION AND QUALIFYING SPEED RECORDS:

ALL-TIME SPEED RECORDS:

	SPEED	DRIVER	BOAT	LOCATION	YEAR
Qualifying.....	173.384 mph.....	Dave Villwock.....	Miss Budweiser.....	San Diego.....	1999
Competition Lap.....	166.221 mph.....	Steve David.....	Miss T-Plus.....	Pearl Harbor, HI.....	1992
Heat Avg.	161.712 mph.....	Mark Tate.....	Winston Eagle.....	San Diego.....	1993
Race Avg.	156.830 mph.....	Mark Tate.....	Close Call.....	Pearl Harbor, HI.....	1997

SPEED RECORDS ON A 3-MILE COURSE:

Qualifying.....	143.426 mph.....	Dean Chenoweth.....	Miss Budweiser.....	Detroit.....	1980
Competition Lap.....	138.817 mph.....	Dean Chenoweth.....	Miss Budweiser.....	Detroit.....	1980
Heat Avg. (4 Laps).....	96.476 mph.....	Chuck Thompson.....	Miss Pepsi.....	Detroit.....	1951
Heat Avg. (5 Laps).....	127.659 mph.....	Dean Chenoweth.....	Miss Budweiser.....	Detroit.....	1980
Race Avg.	120.050 mph.....	Chip Hanauer.....	Atlas Van Lines.....	Detroit.....	1982

SPEED RECORDS ON A 2.5-MILE COURSE:

Qualifying.....	173.384 mph.....	Dave Villwock.....	Miss Budweiser.....	San Diego.....	1999
Competition Lap.....	166.221 mph.....	Steve David.....	Miss T-Plus.....	Pearl Harbor, HI.....	1992
Heat Avg. (3 Laps).....	161.712 mph.....	Mark Tate.....	Winston Eagle.....	San Diego.....	1993
Heat Avg. (5 Laps).....	154.260 mph.....	Mark Tate.....	Close Call.....	Pearl Harbor, HI.....	1997
Race Avg.	156.830 mph.....	Mark Tate.....	Close Call.....	Pearl Harbor, HI.....	1997

SPEED RECORDS ON A 2-MILE COURSE:

Qualifying.....	165.974 mph.....	Chip Hanauer.....	Miss Budweiser.....	Evansville, IN.....	1993
Competition Lap.....	156.713 mph.....	Chip Hanauer.....	Miss Budweiser.....	Evansville, IN.....	1993
Heat Avg. (3 Laps).....	154.185 mph.....	Chip Hanauer.....	Miss Budweiser.....	Evansville, IN.....	1993
Heat Avg. (5 Laps).....	146.904 mph.....	Chip Hanauer.....	Miss Budweiser.....	Evansville, IN.....	1993
Race Avg.	145.024 mph.....	Mark Tate.....	Smokin' Joe's.....	Evansville, IN.....	1996

GOLD CUP SPEED RECORDS:

2-MILE COURSE:

	SPEED	DRIVER	BOAT	LOCATION	YEAR
Qualifying.....	148.885 mph.....	Jimmy Shane.....	Miss HomeStreet.....	Madison, IN.....	2019
Competition Lap.....	146.053 mph.....	Jimmy Shane.....	Miss HomeStreet.....	Madison, IN.....	2019
8-mile heat (4 laps).....	135.605 mph.....	Andrew Tate.....	Delta Realtrac.....	Madison, IN.....	2019
10-mile heat (5 laps).....	135.046 mph.....	Jimmy Shane.....	Miss HomeStreet.....	Madison, IN.....	2019
12-mile heat (6 laps).....	129.104 mph.....	Tom D'Eath.....	Miss Budweiser.....	Evansville, IN.....	1988
Race avg. (36 miles).....	118.507 mph.....	Chip Hanauer.....	Atlas Van Lines.....	Evansville, IN.....	1983
Race avg. (42 miles).....	129.734 mph.....	Jimmy Shane.....	Miss HomeStreet.....	Madison, IN.....	2019
Race avg. (48 miles).....	116.646 mph.....	Scott Pierce.....	Mr. Pringles.....	Evansville, IN.....	1988

2.5-MILE COURSE:

Qualifying.....	170.087 mph.....	Mark Tate.....	Winston Eagle.....	Detroit.....	1993
Competition lap.....	158.155 mph.....	Chip Hanauer.....	Miss Budweiser.....	Detroit.....	1993
7.5-mile heat (3 laps).....	152.526 mph.....	Chip Hanauer.....	Miss Budweiser.....	Detroit.....	1993
10-mile heat (4 laps).....	151.974 mph.....	Dave Villwock.....	Ellstrom.....	Detroit.....	2009
12.5-mile heat (5 laps).....	152.120 mph.....	Mark Tate.....	Smokin' Joe's.....	Detroit.....	1995
Race avg. (45 miles).....	116.387 mph.....	Dean Chenoweth.....	Miss Budweiser.....	Seattle.....	1981
Race avg. (52.5 miles).....	147.943 mph.....	Mark Tate.....	Smokin' Joe's.....	Detroit.....	1994
Race avg. (60 miles).....	108.974 mph.....	Tom D'Eath.....	Miss U.S.....	Tri-Cities, WA.....	1975
Race avg. (90 miles).....	75.599 mph.....	Stanley Dollar.....	Skip-A-Long.....	Detroit.....	1949

Fran Muncey elected to Motorsports Hall of Fame.

Former unlimited hydroplane owner Fran Muncey was among nine legends from the world of motorsports who were named as part of the 33rd class of inductees to the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America (MSHFA). Muncey was one of an unprecedented three women being inducted into the Hall of Fame as part of the class of 2021.

The Motorsports Hall of Fame of America is located in Daytona Beach, Florida, and is the only hall that honors all American motorsports: cars, motorcycles, airplanes, off-road, and powerboats.

Muncey was married to one of Unlimited racing's all-time great drivers and owners, Bill Muncey, who was killed driving the *Atlas Van Lines* at the World Championship in Acapulco, Mexico, in October 1981.

He had asked her to continue the race team if anything happened to him,

so she did. She had a new *Atlas Van Lines* built for the 1982 season, hired Chip Hanauer to do the driving, and went on to have one of the sport's most successful careers as an owner.

During seven years of campaigning boats as the owner of Bill Muncey Enterprises, she won a total of 24 races, putting her eighth on the list of owners who have won the most races. Her tally of race victories includes seven Gold Cups, the second-most among all owners in the sport's history, and she won the national championship three times.

During her career she owned three different hulls that spanned the sport's transition from piston power to turbines. Those boats carried the following names: *Atlas Van Lines* (1982–1984), *Miller American* (1985–1987), *Miller High Life* (1988), and *Miss Circus Circus* (1988). Her drivers were Chip Hanauer and John Prevost. She sold her team to William Bennett following the 1988 season.



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Also being inducted into the Motorsports Hall of Fame as part of the Class of 2021 are:

Davey Allison (Stock Cars), one of NASCAR's 50 greatest drivers; John Cobb (Historical), three-time land speed record holder; Larry Dixon (Drag Racing), three-time NHRA Top Fuel champion; Janet Guthrie (Open Wheel), Indy and NASCAR trailblazer; Nicky "Kentucky Kid" Hayden (Motorcycles), the 2006 MotoGP world champion; Robin Miller (Media), legendary Indy correspondent; Ray Nichols (Historic), multi-time USAC and NASCAR champion; and Judy Stropus (Sports Cars), world-class timer and scorer.

"The Class of 2021 is history-making in so many respects," said MSHFA President George Levy. "Janet Guthrie, Fran Muncey, and Judy Stropus comprise the first-ever class with three female inductees. Fran also joins inaugural-class inductee Bill Muncey as the only husband and wife inductees."

Each year, the Hall of Fame classes are formally inducted at a black-tie gala event. Plans for inducting the 2021 class, as well as for holding the ceremony for 2020 inductees that was postponed because of the pandemic, will be announced soon. ❖

We love to hear from our readers.

I was doing a search for my childhood-and-beyond friend, Pete LaRock, because some friends were talking hydroplanes and I wanted to see if there was information out there regarding Pete's unlimited days. The introduction and the article called "Hydro Dreamer" from your October 2019 issue (first printed in 1974) was wonderful to see.

Pete moved into the house I was born in when we were both about 12. His entire family became close friends with my entire family and we remained friends until most of us have died. Pete had been fighting cancer for many years but was always so positive and so funny. I miss him.

My father built the house he sold to the LaRock's as well as the one next door, where we lived. My father taught Pete to be a carpenter, a skill that served him well.

Pete wouldn't say so, but his younger brother, Larry, drowned after a day of working on the Clapp boat when he and Pete went out for a celebratory sail after finishing a milestone in the reconstruction of the hydro. He put everything into his passion for hydroplanes. They never found Larry's body. Pete barely made it to shore in the dark.

I was glad to see that he was remembered in the article being reprinted and I'm glad I found it. To whoever wrote the intro, thank you.

Gayle (Kirkman) Hughes

MY \$0.02 WORTH

Editorial Comment by Andy Muntz



It turns out that I have another life besides the one spent doing things related to Unlimited-class hydroplanes. I also hang out with old airplanes.

I'm a docent at a museum just up the road from where I live that's called the Flying Heritage and Combat Armor Museum. It's a collection of rare warbirds, military vehicles, tanks, and artillery pieces, mostly from World War II, that was assembled by the late Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft.

Thanks to Covid, the museum is now closed to visitors, but we expect that the place will open again. When that day comes, I'll be there to answer questions and take people on tours—meeting visitors from all corners of the world and hearing many fascinating stories related to the items that are on display.

So, what does this have to do with hydroplane racing?

When I did an analysis of the sport to identify issues that need to be resolved to achieve success in the future, one of the primary concerns is that the people

who now call themselves hydro fans fall into a category best described as old, white guys. In order to have a future, the sport needs to attract a much different group of fans—people who are younger and more diverse.

You'd think the demographic of those liking hydros would be similar to those going to the museum, and largely that's true. But, I've also been amazed by the great many young kids at the museum who seem to be experts on the planes and tanks that are there.

The reason, I've discovered, is that those young people play video games. They play games such as *World of Tanks*, *IL-2 Sturmovik*, and *Dogfight 1942* and, as a result, they've learned all the details about the planes and tanks. They're also very excited to see the real things.

There was a discussion on Facebook recently where hydro fans were expressing their ideas on how to bring the sport to a younger generation. A few blamed the waning interest in the sport on their impression that kids today would rather

stay home and play video games.

Well, if that's so and those kids aren't coming to the sport, then it only makes sense for the sport to go to them.

H1 Unlimited is doing this by promoting HydroSim, a video game where the participants race virtual hydroplanes around virtual racecourses just like those found in Guntersville, Tri-Cities, and Seattle. They call it the E-League and they ran a realistic race series last summer and plan another this spring. There's also the Unlimited Hydroplane League. Sometimes the guys who sit in the real cockpits even get involved.

Check it out on YouTube; you'll be impressed.

Some of the video game participants chimed into the Facebook conversation and confirmed that because of HydroSim, they've become hydro fans, want to learn more about the Unlimiteds, and want to attend a real race someday.

Good for them, because that, after all, is what it's all about. ❖

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Letters are welcome, but may be edited for clarity and space.

PLEASE JOIN US AT THE NEXT MEETING OF UNLIMITEDS UNANIMOUS

The March meeting has been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Check our website for more information.