



# 2013 Season Review

## Good Racing, High Water, Blow-overs, and Retirements round out the season.

by **Brian Anderson**

The Unlimited season of 2013 didn't exactly begin when and where it historically has. This time the season began in February in the far off land of Doha, Qatar on Doha bay. Normally the season ends in Qatar as it did just days prior. Logistically it made sense to stay and start the season right then and there, so they did. This deviation from normal did, however, have all kinds of repercussions, since



Chris Denslow photo

the 2012 season finale caused all kinds of damage to the hulls that are the backbone of this form of motor racing. The home team *Spirit of Qatar* suffered extreme structural damage due to a bad bounce and a backup was quickly found in Nate Browns U-17 which became the 95 *Qatar*. Kip Brown would drive the stand in Qatar and Dave Villwock announced his retirement. During the race more hulls took a beating. In heat 2A Tommy Thompson, driving the U-11



Chris Denslow photo

*Peters & May* got loose in the turn and ran over Brian Perkins in the U-21 *Snoqualmie Casino*. Both drivers were all right but the same couldn't be said for their respective hulls. In the end Jimmy Shane in *Graham Trucking* drove an outstanding race and won followed by Jon Zimmerman in the U-9 Jones Racing and third went to Steve David in *Oh Boy! Oberto*. The remainder of the boats in the final either didn't finish or were disqualified.

The North American portion of the season would begin at a venue last used in 1967. Lake Folsom in Sacramento would once again play host to the Unlimiteds in what would be billed as Big Wake Weekend. Ten boats would make the trip to California for this opener. The field would be led by the U-1 *Oh Boy! Oberto* driven by Steve David, the defending National Champion. Also appearing would be the 5 *Graham Trucking*, Jimmy Shane; 95 *Qatar*, Kip Brown; 57 *FEDCO*, Mark Evans; U-11 *Peters & May*, Tommy Thompson; U-37 *Performance Chevrolet*, J Michael Kelly; 9 *Red Dot*, Jon Zimmerman; U-14 *Toyota*, Greg Hopp; U-22 *Rocky Mountain Tint*, Mike Webster, and the U-100 *Central Coast Airbrush* with Ryan Mallow.

The days racing was filled with a lot of action and in the final heat Steve David drove away from the field and took top honors. Jimmy Shane in *Graham Trucking* ran second and rounding out the top three was the U-37 of J Michael Kelly, this weekend picking up local sponsorship from Performance Chevrolet.

A few weeks later the sport would head to the Midwest for the traditional stop in Madison, Indiana. A longtime favorite on the circuit this small town has been staging a race since the early fifties. This time however the only winner was the weather as high water on the Ohio River made the race impossible to stage as the pit area was underwater. The participants made the best of it with



Chris Denslow photo



Ron Harsin photo



Karl Pearson photo

the boats on display up on the boulevard for all the fans to get up close to. The series then headed to Detroit for the annual Gold Cup race on the tough Detroit River.

From the time the boats were put into the Detroit River it was obvious the two teams to beat would be *Oh Boy! Oberto* and *Graham Trucking*. Steve David set the qualifying mark at 161 mph with Jimmy Shane just a tick back. From there it dropped off a few miles per hour to Jon Zimmerman in *Red Dot* at 155. The prelims saw some good action with *Oberto*, *Qatar*, and *Graham* winning two out of their four heats. The final shaped up to be a classic. Kip Brown grabbed the inside lane but

Steve David pulled ahead. Going in to the roostertail turn Steve David moved over slightly and washed down Jimmy Shane resulting in damage to the front canard of *Graham Trucking*. A penalty was assessed to David and the battle now became between Kip Brown and Jon Zimmerman. Zimmerman looked to have more speed and pulled out front, but Brown had the inside and on the final lap and took control for his first win. There's nothing in the world like winning the Gold Cup for your first race victory.

The teams would now head west for the Washington State races with most of the field intact. The one major incident was a blow-over suffered by Ryan Mallow in the U-100 *Fifth-Third Bank*. There would be work to do before Tri-Cities.

Hot weather greeted the teams as they arrived for the annual race in Tri-Cities. Since 1966 the eastern Washington community has staged a race, typically the last weekend in July. Once again Steve David led all qualifiers at a speed



Karl Pearson photo



Karl Pearson photo

of 158.7 mph, just ahead of Jon Zimmerman in *Red Dot* who checked in at 155.0. Joining the fleet would be Brian Perkins in the U-21 *Albert Lee*.

The preliminaries provided plenty of action, both good and bad. The competition was tough between *Oberto* and *Graham*, but was almost overshadowed by the blow-overs. One was by J. Michael Kelly in *Beacon Plumbing* at the end of the backstretch, and the other was by Kelly Stocklin, now in the U-100 *Central Coast Airbrush* who got light and went over in the middle of the back stretch.

The final saw *Oberto* take the lead at the start followed closely by Jimmy Shane. All through the final Shane gave chase but could not get any closer than a roostertail and finished second. Jon Zimmerman closed out a great weekend for his team finishing third. It was now a quick trip over the mountains to Seattle for the Albert Lee Cup on historic Lake Washington.



Karl Pearson photo

A little rain greeted the teams as they began Friday preparations for the annual event that caps Seattle's Seafair celebration. Another team entered the fray for the weekend as Jamie Nilsen would drive Greg O'Farrell's second entry sponsored by the Snoqualmie Casino, which is just outside North Bend, WA. The leading qualifier again was *Oh Boy! Oberto* at 152.2 mph; the only team over 150 mph on the rough Lake Washington course. Kip Brown in *Qatar* was next at 149 mph.



Karl Pearson photo

The sun ultimately came out and water conditions were near perfect for the Sunday final. It looked to be *Oberto's* weekend as they swept all three of their preliminary heats. The final turned out to be a different story as Kip Brown had the inside at the start. Jimmy Shane was in lane 2 and Steve David was out in 3. Shane got by Brown and was then chased by David, but he just could not run down the up and coming star. Jimmy Shane stayed ahead and brought home longtime sponsor Graham Trucking their first unlimited victory at home in Seattle.



Rich Ormbrek photo

The series now got a few weeks off to prepare for the return of the Diamond Cup in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Coeur d'Alene is a beautiful resort town in Northern Idaho that last played host to an Unlimited race in 1968. That race was won by the current owner of the U-37 *Beacon Plumbing*, Billy Schumacher,

driving the U-1 *Miss Bardahl* (5).

This time around instead of WWII V-12 aircraft engines it would be Lycoming T-55 turbines powering the boats, and the drivers would be safely ensconced in canopies as opposed to the old open cockpits.



Karl Pearson photo

The pit area proved to be a bit of a challenge due a dramatic drop between where the boats were parked and the lake. But, no matter for the experienced crews as they went about their business in the usual fashion.

This time the weekend belonged to Jimmy Shane. After sweeping the prelims he passed J. Michael Kelly on the backstretch and never looked back, assuring him of a perfect day of racing. He also gained points on Steve David for the National Championship, making it a virtual tie going in to the final race in San Diego. Also having a good weekend was *Beacon Plumbing* who won two heats but jumped the gun in the final. The rough water conditions did put one boat out for the season as *Red Dot* sustained hull damage and was unable to continue.

After concluding the season in Qatar the last couple of years, this year's finale would be in San Diego on Mission Bay, which first hosted a race in 1964. This time the national championship battle

would be settled. The lightning quick course produced two boats over 160. David and *Oberto* took top qualifying honors at 161.5 followed closely by Jimmy Shane at 160.7. In the quest for the title these two teams would dominate the race. Steve David would win all of his prelims and Jimmy Shane would take 2 out of his 3, coming in behind Steve David in the other.

In the final the start was so close it took a review of the camera at the start/finish line to determine that *Oh Boy!*

*Oberto* had jumped the gun by a scant half a boat length. Jimmy Shane and *Graham Trucking* won the race and the season point title in the final heat of the season. He had won four of the seasons' seven races, including the last three in a row. He goes into 2014 riding this hot streak.

The season itself had just about everything from one end of the spectrum to the other. It started with the retirement of the winningest driver in history in Dave Villwock and ended with an up and coming star in Jimmy Shane. There was lots of close racing on the water and unfortunately a few crashes, none of which resulted in injuries to the drivers. The low point for the staging of races came at Madison which could not have a race this year due to high water on the Ohio River. Shortly after the season Steve David retired, paving the way for a new crop of youngsters to propel the series forward in 2014.

## LOOKING BACK AND FORWARD

### Commentary on the past and upcoming season

For all of its strangeness the 2013 Unlimited season turned out to be alright. The slightly unorthodox method of two races in a row at the same place to end and the start the season helped some teams and put at least one team on the beach for the year. It is not a method that should be advocated in the future. There needs to be that natural break between season to celebrate or rebuild for the future. The bright spot of the year, and any year is new venues to race at. This year we got both Sacramento and Coeur d'Alene which looked for one glimmering moment to have a permanent spot on the tour. But as of now that doesn't seem likely as rumblings out of Northern California are not promising. The Idaho race looks more solid as they've already began to start promoting the 2014 date. With any luck this race will catch on with that area of the world as well as the die-hards from Seattle making the trip over the mountains.

It's the latest talk at the top that is concerning. Once again there is a group rumored to want to take over and take the sport to "another" level. This would all be good news if we hadn't heard it so many times before. From Bill Doner to Gary Garbrecht and everything in between, it sounds one more time like "this time for sure". I never know what to make of leadership changes until they happen. I guess talk really is cheap as they want to put more racing on the water and the like. It's all fine and dandy, but until the real issues get addressed not a whole lot can be done. If the format of racing is changed that's great, but if a good percentage of boats either blow-over or suffer hull damage due to propeller breakage it does not matter what program you run if after the first set of heats you know who will make the final due to attrition. The real problem for years is that there is not a big enough field of participants, for if you solve that problem you can run any format and it will be highly competitive and then cities will be coming to you to stage a race and then maybe, just maybe, the winner might get mentioned on Sportscenter that night. And whether you like it or not that's a very good indicator of how your sport is doing.



Chris Denslow photo

# HYDROPLANE BUTTONS, MAGIC SOUVENIRS OF HYDROPLANE RACING

by Bob Senior and Brad Haskin



Some of Bob Senior's Button Collection

In early January the authors, long-time hydro buddies, met for breakfast. The hydro chatter quickly turned to unlimited hydroplane button collecting. They decided to collaborate on a UNJ story and tell the passion of their shared popular hobby. Bob is a long-time member of the Seafair Race Committee and recently retired after a 56-year career with the United States Postal Service. Brad is a former hydroplane crewmember, has been an H1 Unlimited official, and currently is employed by the King County, Washington Sheriff's Department.

**Bob:** I watched the Seafair races on television all through the Fifties, and even attended two Apple Cup races at Lake Chelan. But I did not make my first pilgrimage to the Stan Sayres Pits at Seafair until 1964. There I met a guy wearing a fabulous



cowboy hat loaded with colorful old souvenir hydroplane buttons. He was trying to sell the hat for fifty bucks so he could take his girl-friend to dinner at the Space Needle before joining the Navy. Fifty dollars seemed like a huge amount in those days, and nobody had taken him up on the offer. I had \$42.00 on me. I told him I would keep \$2.00 for a hotdog and a coke, and offered \$40.00. “Done”, he said! I was immediately hooked on collecting. On previous page; Bob Senior showing buttons in 1969 to Leo VandenBerg. *Miss Budweiser* (6) seen in background. ~ H&RM Collection photo

**Brad:** I’m a more recent collector, Bob. There are lots and lots of common collectible buttons over the years. I think this story should tell *UNJ* readers mostly about the early years, and the most rare and valuable buttons.

**Bob:** I quickly learned that my 1964 \$40.00 hat contained buttons from the three top icons of hydroplane racing of their era, the “Pink” Gale, the Shanty I, and Hawaii Kai III. Three dozen other buttons adorned the hat, which at today’s values would probably be worth well over \$1000.00!

**Brad:** Although some pre-World War II unlimited races used buttons for Pit Passes, the first recognized hydroplane “boat button” collectible appeared in 1952. Mobilgas was the fuel sponsor for the Gold Cup races in the 50s. The company had a gasoline sales contest. Several regional contest winners won a ride in Stan Sayres’ *Slo-Mo-Shun IV*. They each received a Slo-Mo IV “Ride With Stan Sayres” souvenir button. It is extremely rare and your two authors have never been able to obtain one. It has sold on eBay for the highest price known in hydroplane button collecting.



**Bob:** Around 1995 noted collector Mac Clouse purchased a large hydroplane button collection from the mid-west. It contained yet a different version of the “Ride With Stan Sayres” button. It could have been a different version of the “contest” button, but there is suspicion that it could be a fake. Above Mac’s “Ride With Stan Sayres” button. (I also have one of these buttons with a stainless steel pin ~ Editor).



**Brad:** In 1954 Lee Schoenith’s Gale Team issued the “Pink” Gale. Lee’s mother, Millie, exclaimed “why is the boat pink? Our boat is lime green and mahogany. And the button needs some water!” She hand-painted water and crewmember’ names on a few of the buttons. The hand-painted “Pink” Gale is extremely rare. Unlimited Racing Commission “Czar” Lee Schoenith came to Seafair in the 70s and sold pockets-full of Pink Gale buttons (probably a re-print) to anxious collectors for \$50 apiece.

**Bob:** William T. Waggoner, Jr. raced *Shanty I* and two *Mavericks* from 1956 to 1959 and issued souvenir buttons from each of those boats. Waggoner also set up his “personal” pits within the hydro pits, the idea being to keep others from spying



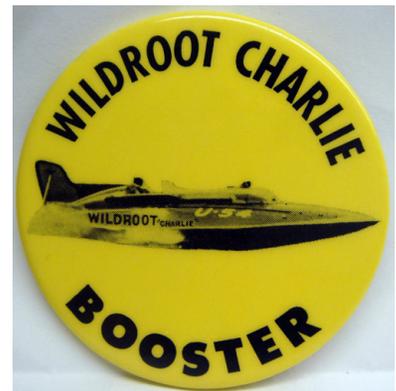
on his propellers and fuel mixture. Special *Shanty-Maverick* “W” pit pass buttons were required for entry. Again, this created a very hard-to-find collectible. ~ Jim Schaeffer photos

**Brad:** *Hawaii Kai III* and driver Jack Regas won five straight races at the end of 1957. In 1958 the boat was turned over to Crew Chief Mike Welsch and they won the only race they entered that year, the Seattle Gold Cup. The first edition of the *Hawaii Kai III* buttons were given out in this era. ~ Mac Clouse photo



**Bob:** At the 1965 Seattle Gold Cup, Jack Regas’ brother Danny showed up with a bag of re-printed “second edition” Kai buttons. He mostly gave them away to pretty girls. Collectors were able to add a second prized Kai button to their collection. This button has a slightly smaller diameter. And at the 1967 Seattle Gold Cup it was again Danny Regas giving out a “third” edition Kai button. It was the same size as the first edition, but is noted for heavy, thicker black lettering. It is by far the hardest Kai button to collect.

**Brad:** In 1957 Bob Schroeder from Buffalo, N.Y. bought the old *Gale IV*, obtained a sponsorship from Wildroot hair tonic, and named the boat *Wildroot Charlie*, after their TV jingle. In a photo of the boat on display at a Buffalo boat show, a sign showed small Charlie buttons for sale at \$1.00 each. This “Lemon Charlie” has become very rare and expensive. In 1958 a darker yellow Wildroot Charlie button was passed out. It only has modest value. A third “Charlie” button has no boat graphic, but names Ed Schroeder as crew chief. ~ Jim Schaeffer photo



**Bob:** In 1957 the Windmill Pointe Yacht Club in Michigan sold six different collectible hydroplane buttons. They were oval-shaped, red-white-and-blue, with black-and-white photos of six different boats; *Miss Pepsi*, *Miss U.S. II*, *Miss Wayne*, *Such Crust III*, *Gale V*, and *What-A-Pickle*. To date, very few top collectors have been able to collect a full set of six.

**Brad:** The Supertest Petroleum Company, a Canadian firm, raced three different unlimiteds from 1954 to 1961.

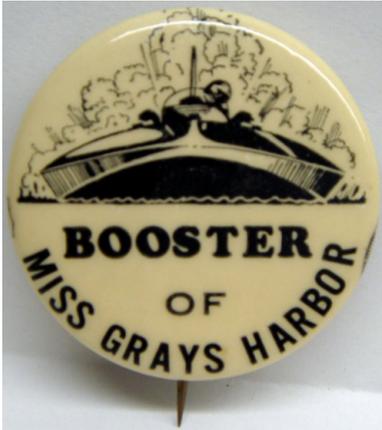
The only year a *Miss Supertest* appeared in Seattle was 1958. Their team members passed out a few buttons which were apparently corporate promotional items, not really intended as boat buttons.

However, collectors have avidly sought seven different Supertest buttons. The green stem button, the black letters item, and a smaller black letters button are the most prized



and valuable Miss Supertest buttons. At right are the two Supertest buttons from Jim Schaeffer's collection.

**Bob:** In 1960 Mark Aarhaus of Satsop, Washington built an unlimited hull in his barn. A photo of the boat appeared in the Seattle Times newspaper. The boat never had an engine,



gearbox or running gear, and never appeared at a race. But the

clever Mr. Aarhaus sold Booster of Miss Grays Harbor buttons for \$5.00. It is very rare. ~ Jim Schaeffer photo



**Brad:** In 1960 *Miss Burien* was selected among a three-team American challenge for the Harmsworth Trophy race in Ontario. To raise funds for the trip, the Miss Burien team made two fund-raiser buttons which were

red plastic. A diamond-shaped button was sold to the fans for \$1.00. A triangle-shaped buttons were sold to local merchants for \$10.00. The triangle piece is considered to be quite difficult to collect.



**Bob:** The B & I Circus Store in Tacoma, Washington sponsored two different shop by Bob Gilliam in 1956.

hydroplanes. One was a boat built in the Fort Lewis, Washington hobby shop by Bob Miller of Everett, Washington bought the ex-*Gale IV / Wildroot Charlie* in 1962, the B & I store again stepped up as a sponsor. They sold white Miss B & I buttons to the public for \$1.00. The B & I store rented spaces to a number of businesses. For the publicity they were to receive, they were asked to donate toward the sponsorship and could obtain a gold Miss B & I button. A brown Miss B & I button is also rumored to exist. The gold item is scarce and of high value. ~ Jim

Schaeffer photo



**Bob:** In 1963 a jet-powered hydroplane named *Miss Stars and Stripes II* crashed on Hubbard Lake, Michigan while attempting a world water speed record. Oval buttons bearing a photo of the boat had been sold via the local Alpena, Michigan chamber of commerce for \$1.00. While not a competitive unlimited hydroplane, this button has become a very popular piece within the hydroplane souvenir collecting hobby. ~ Jim Schaeffer photo



**Bob:** In 1963 Glenn and Milo Stoen, Seattle-area distributors for Exide Batteries, self-sponsored the *Miss Exide* hydroplane. They made two different buttons that year, bearing the same logo. One was a 2-inch very common metal button. The other had the logo embossed between two transparent diamond-shaped pieces of plastic. Only 50 of them were made. The “Diamond Exide” buttons were only given to family members attending races at Lake Tahoe and San Diego. He passed them out very sparingly at Seattle.



**Brad:** In 1964 Bill Schuyler, owner of the *\$ Bill* hydroplane, made 500 red, oval-shaped buttons, depicting his logo, “a duck riding an egg beater”. He gave away 100 at each at the first 4 races of the season. When he got to Seattle with only 100 left, he realized he would need to save some buttons for his friends attending races at Lake Tahoe and San Diego. He passed them out very sparingly at Seattle. Thus, very few collectors got one at Seafair, making the \$ Bill item quite scarce and valuable.



**Bob:** Jim and Yvonne Ranger made several My Gypsy buttons between 1966 and 1969, including the jumbo Jim Ranger and three common oval My Gypsy buttons. At the Detroit races from 1966 to 1968 they hosted a big party at the Dodge mansion for the hydro teams, Detroit politicians and high society. Each guest received a special My Gypsy “Pool Party” button. Jim and Yvonne came to the Seafair Pits in 1969 in a limousine. They announced “sorry, we didn’t have a Pool Party this year”, then passed out “Sorry, No Pool Party” buttons.

**Brad:** Between 1971 and 1973 a well-known hydroplane photographer would show his best photos to boat owners and sell them 100 buttons at a commercial rate. Then he asked each of them if it would be okay for him to make “a few” extras to sell to “those crazy collectors” to compensate him for his time. There is some suspicion about just how many “a few” really is. Anyway, among them were a Miss Madison Booster, two Miss Madison Racing Teams, two Pay’n Paks, three Miss Budweiser’s, Mister Fabricator, Miss Timex, Lincoln Thrift, (the only numbered buttons in this group), Valu-Mart, and Country Boy. The latter two seem to be the hardest for collectors to acquire, and have commanded fairly high prices recently.



**Bob:** Over the years it became almost a mandatory tradition that many hydro teams would make buttons and give them out or toss them over the fence at Seafair. Many hydro fans would write letters to racing personalities or boat sponsors, requesting a souvenir button for their collection. Sponsors would often make souvenir buttons to promote their brand. These included the likes of Thriftway, Bardahl, Pay ‘n Save, Chrysler, Harrah’s Club, Smirnoff, Budweiser, Pay ‘n Pak, Oberto and many others.

**Bob:** In 1961 the Miss Spokane racing team created the very first metal unlimited hydroplane “spike and gripper” tack or hat pin. Only 120 were manufactured, and perhaps only 20 were distributed to crewmembers and their families. The others lay on a closet shelf for about 30 years, and were then given

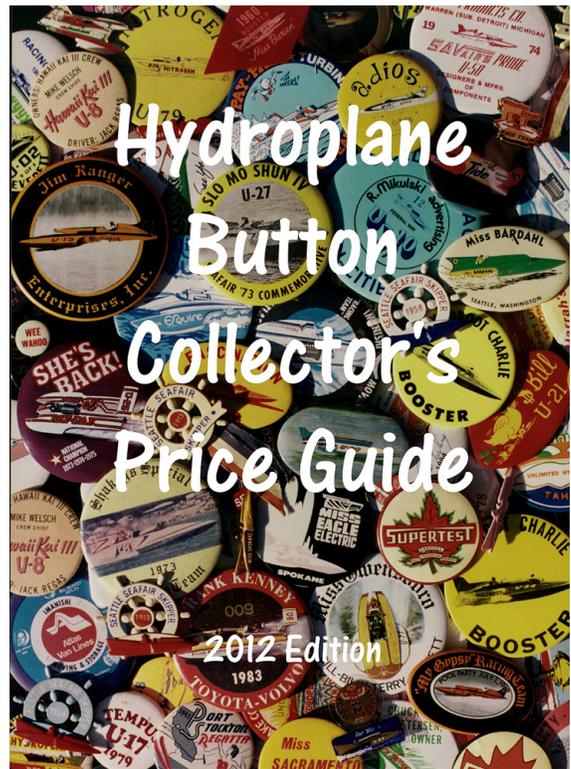
to the late Ron Miller, who had acquired *Miss Spokane/Miss Lapeer* from owner Jim Herrington. Miller sold them all to various collectors in a failed attempt to raise funds to restore *Miss Spokane*. The Miss Spokane “tack” led to a brand-new and popular category of collectibles for hydroplane collectors.

**Brad:** I have tried to add a unique feature to unlimited hydroplane button collecting. I take a sharpie to the races and have the drivers and owners autograph them. Sometimes I have mailed a button to a driver for an autograph, with a pre-paid return envelope. This has been fairly successful. But once I mailed a button, only to learn that the driver had suffered a fatal accident. I figured that button was a goner. I sent the widow a note of condolence and told her my dilemma. Lucky me! She mailed the button to me a few days later, and it was autographed! She told me that her late husband had signed it just before the accident, but had not mailed it yet. It now holds a special place in my collection.

**Bob:** Well-known collector Ned Olsoe annually publishes and sells the Hydroplane Button Collector’s Price Guide. It describes race team and regatta buttons, with 160 pages listing over 6,300 items, with sizes, colors, descriptions, and typical high and low values. The Guide sells for \$25.00 postage-paid. Contact Ned at [olsoe@msn.com](mailto:olsoe@msn.com)

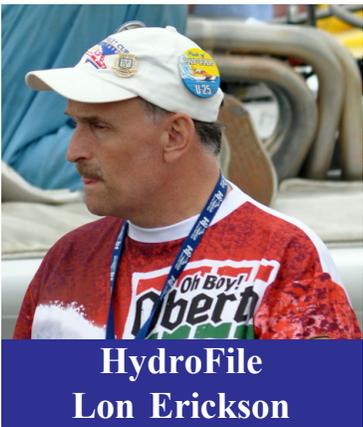
**Bob:** Three times a year I publish Hydro Collector’s

Corner, with circulation to over 160 serious hydroplane souvenir collectors. HCC includes a FREE want-ad service, with news of buttons, tacks and race programs for sale or trade, new hydro-themed books, swap meets and auctions, photo sources, retail outlets, and other resources aimed at pulling the collecting hobby together. Three issues cost \$3.00. You can contact Bob at [bob.senior37@hotmail.com](mailto:bob.senior37@hotmail.com)



**Brad:** If you want to view and enjoy a collection of well over 2,000 different hydroplane buttons, visit the Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum in Kent, Washington. ([www.thunderboats.ning.com](http://www.thunderboats.ning.com)) Collector Karl Pearson has his entire personal collection on display there.

**Bob and Brad:** Collecting hydroplane buttons and tacks may not be every hydro fan’s cup of tea, but the items themselves are colorful and constant reminders of favorite boats and races of days gone by.



### H1 Awards Banquet

Anyone interested in going? More info., details, cost, reservations to follow

H1 Unlimited announced on Monday, January 13th the annual awards banquet will now be held on Saturday March 15 at the Snoqualmie Casino in North Bend, not far from Seattle.

The winter meetings will be on Friday March 14 and Saturday March 15 in Issaquah, WA. at the Hilton Garden Inn. The meetings and banquet were originally scheduled and subsequently postponed for the Belterra Casino near Madison, IN for last November.

No reason given for the change of location by H1.

More details for tickets and hotel reservations should be on the H1 website soon.

### Developments on the Potential New Organization

Based on communication from Nauticpromo, the marketing & promotion group representing the new organization, The Ultimate Hydroplane Series. The proposals and plans for changes for the sport in 2014 continue to be in a very fluid state and changing, as a result of feedback coming from the unlimited owners and working with H1 officials. As we reported, there have been a series of meetings with some owners very excited about potential changes and others not as receptive. This new organization has proposed different ideas for race structure, rules, officiating, team contracts & race bonus payouts, independent sport management, new sponsorship & investors, technical standards, and restructuring of the board of directors. In light of the current timeframe and deadlines for the 2014 season schedule, race site negotiations, current/potential sponsors, the focus is to work within the current H1 organization with a few amendments and those alternatives are now being discussed.



## Around the Circuit

2013 Gold Cup winning driver, **Kip Brown**, was the speaker at the **Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum's holiday party** and meeting. He talked about his early involvement with boat racing. He believes he attended his first limited race when he

was four! He spent his early years growing up in Issaquah, Wash. and remembers going to the limited and outboard races at Alexander's Resort on Lake Sammamish, near Issaquah. (Alexander's was a privately owned beach park on the lake.) When he was eight or nine he moved to California. His uncle, Nate Brown, would send him copies of *Hot Boat* and *Propeller* magazines and it seemed like he was the only kid he knew in his California neighborhood that followed hydros. He moved back to Seattle when he was a senior in high school and lived on a boat in Seattle with his dad, but attended Issaquah High School. He crewed on a limited boat and worked with Nate Brown on smaller boats. His uncle got a wood boat in trade and he got the "Tapeworm" 2.5 stock for graduation; he described the boat as a turd! After that he raced flatbottoms for nine years.

Kip told the story of how he got his ride in uncle Nate's U-17 boat. Nate told him he was going to build an unlimited and needed his help. Nate said he would like to drive at first, but knew he'd want to turn over driving duties and would turn them over to Kip, if he'd help build the boat... "free labor." Kip agreed and said building a boat was something he would never forget or do again. Thirteen people worked to build the boat and sometimes he worked seventy hours a week. When Nate turned over U-17 driving duties to Kip, he described the boat fast in the straightaway and absolutely terrible to turn. Nate told Kip to "buck up" and work on conditioning. The first year they headed to the Doha race, Kip could not get vacation and uncle Nate had to drive. After the race Nate asked Kip, "How the hell did you drive this?" Evidently, Nate peeled the foam off the steering wheel when driving the boat in the Doha race. Now Nate knew first-hand there was a major turning problem with the boat, especially when

racing in competition. The issues were fixed over the winter break from racing, mainly thanks to new skid fin purchased from the Oberto team.

Kip talked about his Gold Cup win. He said he approached the Gold Cup race in Detroit differently than other races, more of a war of attrition. He said they had one bumper heat and some lucky heat draws. The boat was running well, too, while some other boats had problems. Getting ready for the final heat he went for the inside lane and had a good start. Although Steve David in the Oberto was ahead of him, he heard over the radio that there was a penalty, so his real competition was the U-9 and he believes there were eight lead changes with the U-9. In the last lap the U-9 had the lead and Kip thought the race was over, but this was Detroit. There are often some really bad spots on the racecourse and, with racing bad luck, Jon Zimmerman in the U-9 hit just about all of the bad water racing outside of Kip in the last lap. Kip's boat had much better water and was able to win. Kip described the race as the best unlimited race he has been part of.

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**Unlimiteds Unanimous (UU), the club that publishes the *Unlimited News Journal*, selected their 2013 Rookie, Crew Chief, Boat, and Driver of the Year at the December meeting.**

The **Rookie of the Year** is awarded to a new driver that UU believes has the potential to win a race in the future. **Jamie Nilsen** was selected as the Rookie of the Year. UU members were impressed with the way Nilsen handled the *Snoqualmie Casino* boat.

UU members had a spirited discussion about who to select for **Crew Chief of the Year**. There were several well-qualified candidates including Jeff Campbell, Mike Hanson, Tom Anderson and more. UU selected **Tom Anderson**, of Graham Trucking, as the Crew Chief of the Year. As one UU member said, "Anderson had an older boat and he got more out of that boat."

The **Boat of the Year** honor goes to the hull UU members think would win a mythical race at the end of the year. UU members selected *Oh Boy! Oberto*. Simply put, it was the fastest boat on the 2013 circuit.

**Driver of the Year** goes to **Jimmy Shane** of *Graham Trucking*. He raced with heart and had few errors.

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## NEXT MONTH: Time Capsule; 1964

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Letters may be edited for clarity and space.

## Next Meeting of Unlimiteds Unanimous & RC Hydro Show

-everyone welcome!-

Saturday, February 8th  
10 am to 4 pm

Hydroplane & Raceboat Museum  
5917 So. 196<sup>th</sup> St.  
Kent, Washington

## Silver Lake Dental Arts

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