

UNLIMITED NewsJournal

A CHRONICLE OF SPEED

MAY 2023

Visiting hydro history.

THE TIME MACHINE TAKES US BACK
25, 50, 75, AND 100 YEARS AGO.



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

The "Winged Wonder" Pay 'n Pak made its debut 50 years ago on a Monday afternoon in April 1973.

Boat racing's history is longer than most sports. The American Power Boat Association was formed 120 years ago and the first running of its premier event, the APBA Gold Cup, came a year after that. It's now the oldest trophy in American motorsports. In recognition of that deep history, we take a trip in a time machine each year at this time to look at where this sport had been in those

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long-ago times 25, 50, 75, and 100 years ago. Let's go back in time and see what happened in the world of hydroplane racing in 1923, 1948, 1973, and 1998.

100 YEARS AGO The 1923 Season

APBA officials had successfully chased Gar Wood out of the Gold Cup. By changing the rules in 1922 to allow only “gentleman’s runabouts,” boats without steps that pushed them to the surface of the water so they could go faster, Wood’s string of Gold Cup victories ended at five in a row. Col. Jesse Vincent, chief engineer for the Packard Motor Car Company and the developer of the Liberty engine, had instead won the coveted trophy in 1922 with a boat named *Packard Chriscraft*.

But Gar Wood found another way to maintain his status as the most famous boat racer in the world. He turned his attention to the Harmsworth Trophy, which he won in 1920 and in 1921, and devised a new boat racing event known as the International Sweepstakes.

The first running of the new race was scheduled to be a part of an event called the Detroit Regatta, which was held during the first weekend of Septem-

ber and would be by far the biggest thing on that season’s boat-racing calendar. The Gold Cup came first on the schedule, but due to the fame of Gar Wood and the \$25,000 purse for the Sweepstakes, was considered by the press as the second of the two important races—something that surely rankled the men who wore the official hats at the APBA.

The Gold Cup’s first heat was easily won by a craft named *Rainbow III*, which was entered by a Canadian named Harry Greening, who was gaining a reputation within the sport as a serious contender. The boat, designed by John Hacker specifically for the race, cruised to an average speed of 45 mph and finished about 37 seconds ahead to the defending champion *Packard Chriscraft*, which was being driven by Caleb Bragg. Gar Wood’s entry, a boat named *Curtiss Baby Gar Jr.*, finished third with his brother George at the helm.

The next day’s second heat was a near duplicate of the first, with *Rainbow III* again winning—this time with a margin over Bragg of 43 seconds and an average speed of 44.7 mph. *Curtiss Baby Gar Jr.* was again third, but with



Public Domain

Col. Jesse Vincent

Gar Wood driving. So, it seemed that the third and final heat would be a mere formality. And, sure enough, Greening was off to an early lead. But, on his next to last lap, a cotter pin came loose on the boat’s rudder. By the time it could be repaired, Gar Wood, Caleb Bragg, and a boat named *Lady Shores* had gone past and finished ahead of him.

That created a problem. According to the point system used at the time, both *Rainbow III* and *Packard Chriscraft*



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Packard Chriscraft with Jesse Vincent driving, the winner of the 1923 Gold Cup.

had earned 21 points. To break the tie, officials referred to the rule book and decided that the boat with the lower total elapsed time would be the winner—Jesse Vincent's *Packard Chriscraft*.

"There is no doubt that the committee acted in perfect fairness, and Greening took the decision in a sportsmanlike manner," reported *The Rudder*, "but the obvious unfairness of any rule that allows a boat to win when she has nothing better than second place against a boat that has won twice and finished fourth once, called for much comment."

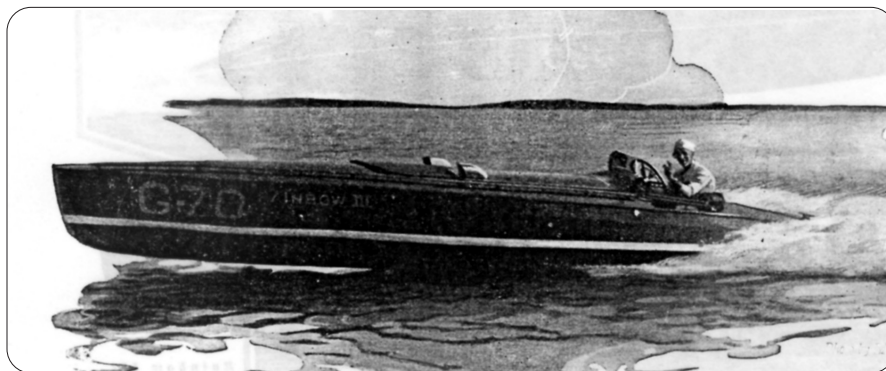
The weekend's main event was next. The Sweepstakes was a 150-mile marathon—50 laps around the three-mile Detroit River racecourse.

Gar Wood had built two boats for the new event: *Teddy* and *Bruin*, named for the two small stuffed bears that had become indispensable good-luck charms and constant riding companions aboard each of Gar Wood's boats. *Teddy* would be driven by Wood's brother George and *Bruin* by his brother Phil.

Jesse Vincent took an early lead in the race aboard *Packard Chriscraft II* and held that position through 33 laps, until its engine began to misfire, and *Teddy* roared past. That's when the controversy started. As George Wood pushed *Teddy* ahead during the 43rd lap, air pressure coming through the scoop on the bow popped the hatches from the deck above the engines and sent them flashing past Wood's head and into the river.

Losing the hatches did not affect the performance of *Teddy*, but it put the boat in violation of a rule that required the motor compartment to be "entirely closed in with hatches." What's more, the rules also said a boat had to complete the race with all of its equipment intact to be eligible for the prize money.

Fred Still, the president of the APBA, noticed the infraction and asked that the boat be flagged off the course, but Gar Wood objected. Watching the race from the official's stand without permission, according to the report in *The Rudder*, he



Rosenfeld Collection



Rosenfeld Collection

TOP: *Rainbow III* was tied with *Packard Chriscraft* at the 2023 Gold Cup but lost the tie-breaker.
ABOVE: *Curtiss Baby Car Jr.* finished third with Gar Wood driving.

"objected to the flagging-in of the boat so strenuously that Still did not act immediately."

"It's against the rules," Still said. "We've got to flag her in."

Infuriated, Gar Wood then grabbed the flag and began to wave his boat in, but his crew ignored the signal because they saw that Wood was doing the waving and they knew he wasn't a race official. Finally, with only five laps left, George Wood realized what was happening, he steered *Teddy* to the dock, the crew gave the boat the hatches from *Bruin* (which had dropped out earlier), and he continued on his way. It finished about six minutes ahead of *Packard Chriscraft II* at an average speed of about 50 mph.

Vincent protested the result right after the race and Gar Wood threatened to get an injunction to prevent any payment of prize money, but the matter was settled the next day when a committee decided that *Teddy* was indeed the winner. The response of the officials had been too confusing, they ruled. But each committee member also resigned, saying Wood had greatly overstepped his authority by interfering with the judges.

The controversy was also the final blow for Chris Smith, Wood's former partner who had designed and built his earliest race boats and was now working with Vincent. Smith formally ended his business relationship with Wood and focused his energy on his new boat building company, a business that would become known around the world as Chris-Craft.

75 YEARS AGO

The 1948 Season

The boat that dominated the 1947 season was out of the picture. The defending national champion *Miss Pepsi V* was replaced with a new step hull designed by Clell Perry. With a change of heart by the APBA, the Dossin brothers could also legitimately name their new craft *Miss Pepsi* without having to go through the chicanery of the year before.

Although it was a time when the three-point design was gaining favor among boat racers, another step hull was also introduced in 1948. The noted build-



ABOVE: Detroit baker Jack Schafer made his first serious entry into the sport in 1948 with his new *Such Crust* three-pointer. With Dan Arena driving, the boat would win three races and the season's national championship.
BELOW: *Lahala* at Detroit before the 1948 Gold Cup. The boat was a serious contender throughout the season.

er John Hacker had designed a boat for a pair of Detroit businessmen named Ed Schoenherr and E.W. Gregory that offered new ideas for the old design concept. Named *My Sweetie*, the boat had three steps—one toward the bow, another amidships, and a third near the transom—and was powered with an Allison engine that drove a propeller under the engine at the center of the hull.

Another new craft featured the more progressive design of the time coming from Ventnor Boat

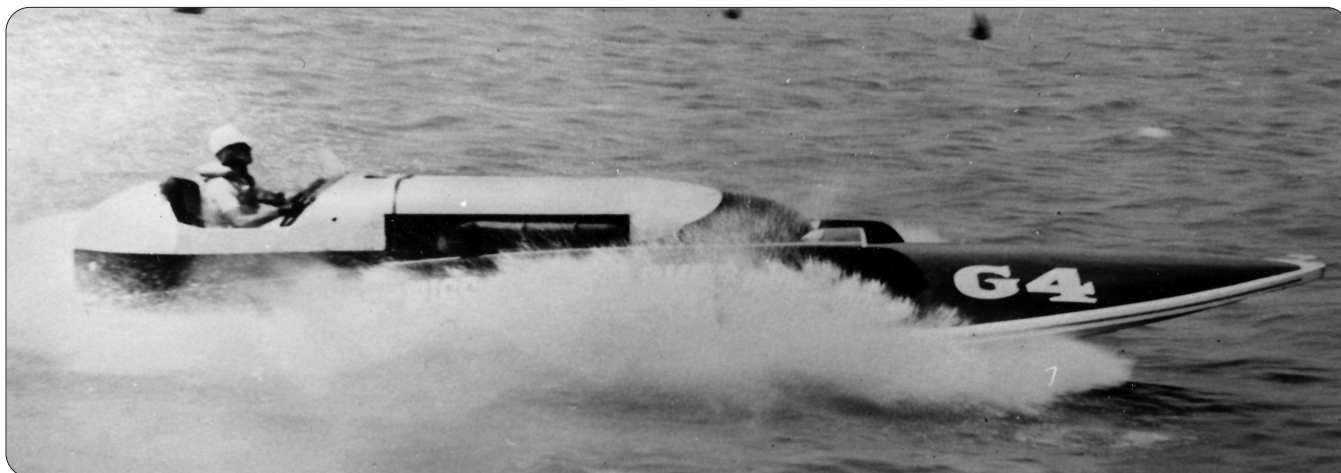
Works and introduced an owner who would continue to be involved in the sport for the next decade and beyond. Jack Schafer, the owner of a bakery business that supplied bread to grocery stores throughout Michigan, liked to say he won his first hydroplane in a poker game—a craft named *Hot Potato* that he entered in the 1947 President's Cup. He was so enthused by the experience, he ordered a new boat from Ventnor, named it *Such Crust*, and joined the 1948 fleet with Dan Arena in the cockpit.

The winner of the season's first major race was a perpetual favorite, however. Guy Lombardo had repowered his *Tempo VI* with an Allison engine and made other modifications to the hull and won the Detroit Memorial. Schafer then claimed his first career victory when Lombardo's boat did not start the final heat of the Percy Jones Memorial on Gull Lake near Battle Creek, Michigan. *Such Crust* won again at the Maple Leaf Trophy in Windsor, Ontario, finishing ahead of Danny Foster in *Miss Great Lakes*.

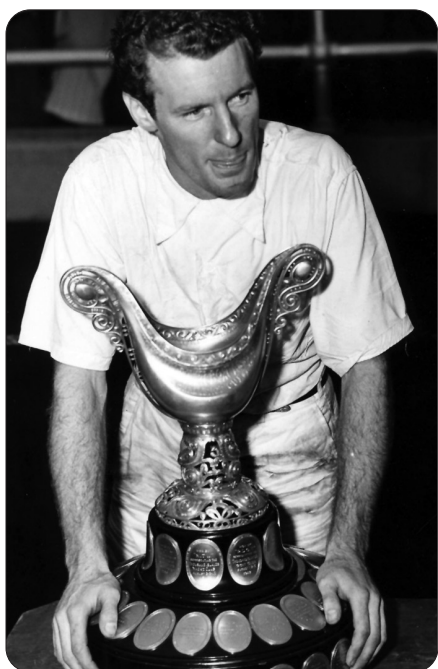
Then came the Gold Cup, which attracted a record 22 entries. The day before, the *New York Times* reported that 11 of the boats in the field had done or could do better than 100 mph on the straightaways. "Most, if not all of the Gold Cup records should be broken and raised tomorrow," promised Clarence Lovejoy.

But Mother Nature had other ideas. Though the weather was scorching hot—the day's high would reach 97 degrees—the biggest problem was a stiff breeze that had kicked up from the west and, blowing against the river's current, caused rolling





ABOVE: *Miss Great Lakes* was the only entry to plow through the rough Detroit River for the full 90 miles and was the winner of the 1948 Gold Cup. **LEFT:** Driver Danny Foster with the Gold Cup trophy.



swells and whitecaps to form that turned the racecourse into a tropical version of the North Sea.

Morlan Visel of California, driving a hump-backed boat named *Hurricane IV*, grabbed the inside lane at the start of the first heat, but as the boats roared for the starting line, the boat's rudder broke off and it veered to the right—directly into the path of the oncoming *Tempo VI*. Lombardo quickly spun his steering wheel to the left and sent his boat into a snap roll that tossed him from the cockpit. Luckily, Lombardo suffered only a broken left arm.

That was only the beginning of the destruction. As the wind grew stronger

and the seas grew worse, the affair took on the character of a demolition derby at the state fair. One by one, the 22 shiny, well-tuned, and expensive boats in the pit areas began to succumb to the conditions.

Lahala, a craft from New Jersey, suffered a broken back and lost many of its bottom planks by the time it completed the first heat. The new *Such Crust* became another victim, as did *My Sweetie*. The side of *Miss Canada III* split open and a boat named *Sant' Ambrogio*, which had come all the way from Italy to compete in the race, sank with a hole in its bottom. Many other boats didn't even get onto the river, but were instead kept in the pits for fear they also would become costly members of the casualty list.

Only one boat was left standing—a battered *Miss Great Lakes*. During the day's final heat, Foster piloted the craft through the waves like he was the skipper of a fishing trawler. He'd shake his fist at those on the official tower each time he crossed the finish line and pointed to the bottom of his boat, trying to let them know it was coming apart. Finally, after crashing through the surf the required 30 miles, Foster nursed *Miss Great Lakes* across the finish line one last time and shut off the engine. As he acknowledged the cheers of the spectators, the hooting of horns, and the tooting of whistles, his

crew towed the boat back to the pits as they frantically worked a pump to keep it afloat. They lost their battle just as it neared the shore.

The calamity of the Gold Cup dramatically reduced the number of boats able to participate in the Silver Cup a few days later. *Miss Canada III* won the first two heats with victories over the new *Miss Pepsi* and Lou Fageol in a boat named *So Long*. Taking third-place honors was a boat named *Miss Frostie*, which had won the Silver Cup the year before as *Notre Dame* and was purchased the previous winter by Warren Avis, the owner of a new rental car business.

The season wrapped up with a victory by *Such Crust* and Dan Arena in the President's Cup. While the boat set a record while turning a lap of about 81 mph, it spent much of the day chasing Harry Lynn and *Lahala*, which ran ahead before it faltered with engine problems. *My Sweetie* also led a few laps with Bill Cantrell driving before it also was eliminated by mechanical failure. When it was over, *Such Crust* enjoyed a clear victory over *Lahala* in the race for the national championship.

50 YEARS AGO

The 1973 Season

The boat's designer humbly called it an evolution, but there's few who would argue a half century later that it was a revolutionary hydroplane that showed up at Seattle's Stan Sayres Memorial Pits on the afternoon of Monday, April 9, 1973. The craft was brilliant white with stunning orange and black markings, but it was the thing that rested atop two vertical tails set near the transom of the boat that most caught the attention of those who watched the new *Pay 'N Pak* arrive for its christening that day.

It was a wing!

Dave Heerensperger, the team's owner, had shocked most of those in the sport the day after the 1972 season ended when he sold his successful *Pride of Pay 'N Pak* to Bernie Little, the owner of *Miss Budweiser*. But Heerensperger was willing to part with his boat because he had something new in the works. Months earlier he had asked Ron Jones to design and build a new boat that would be even better—and Jones did just that.

Details about the new hydroplane began to emerge from Jones's shop in



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Mickey Remund (left) and Dean Chenoweth battled each other throughout the 1973 season.

Costa Mesa, California, early in 1973. A press release promised it would be "new and revolutionary." It would have aerodynamic cowlings and there were reports it would be built using a strong but lightweight material called Hexcel, a sort of aluminum sandwich with thin sheets of the metal on the top and bottom of a honeycombed core. But, nothing was mentioned about a wing.

Then came its first public appearance in April. According to crew chief

Jim Lucero, the wing had two functions: it gave the rear of the boat some lift and it provided better directional stability and control. It also grabbed attention. Fans argued over its merits. Would it cause the boat to become airborne? Would it come off when the boat hit high speed or ran into large swells? It was just the kind of attention the sponsor side of Heerensperger most craved.

As the season got underway, the new *Pay 'N Pak* had the typical period



Randy Hall

The "Winged Wonder" *Pay 'N Pak* returns to the pits after a run on Lake Washington.



Randy Hall

of fine tuning. The crew tried different props, shifted the weight around a little bit, and made small changes to its sponsorships to get its ride just right. But, you'd never know that by its performance. The *Pay 'n Pak* won the first race it entered, the Champion Spark Plug Regatta in Miami. Meanwhile, while the team and their driver Mickey Remund worked the bugs out, their old boat—now painted *Budweiser* gold, red, and white and driven by Dean Chenoweth—played the role of chief nemesis.

Remund and Chenoweth would become locked in a struggle throughout the 1973 season. After the Miami race, Chenoweth took his turn at the winner's circle by claiming victories in both Detroit and Owensboro, Kentucky. But Remund was never far behind. He finished second behind Chenoweth at Detroit then the two switched positions as Remund won and Chenoweth placed second in Madison, Indiana.

There also were some surprises. In his only appearance as an Unlimited-class driver, Gene Whipp won the first heat in Bob Fendler's *Lincoln Thrift's 71/4% Special* and was following well behind *Pay 'n Pak* in the final when *Notre Dame* threw a prop that caused the boat to begin sinking and forced driver Ron Larsen to jump into the water. That stopped the heat. In the restart, Remund



Randy Hall

TOP: Dean Chenoweth in the cockpit of *Miss Budweiser*. **ABOVE:** Bill Muncey won everything in *Atlas Van Lines* the year before, but struggled during the 1973 season.

grabbed the inside lane but was washed down in the first turn and *Pay 'n Pak's* engine began sputtering. Chenoweth then took *Miss Budweiser* into the lead with Whipp right behind, until Whipp passed him during the fourth lap and stayed there to the finish line.

The other surprise was the performance of *Atlas Van Lines*, the defending champion, having won six of seven events in 1972. A year later, while Remund and Chenoweth skirmished for the lead in about every race, Bill Muncey and *Atlas Van Lines* only did well sometimes—earning second-place honors in the Gold Cup and in Owensboro. Otherwise, they had a miserable time. The team tested a fuel-injection system at a

couple of races, with limited success, and elsewhere endured magneto problems, a water system failure, two thrown rods, and a broken camshaft.

"We've gone from a historical season to a hysterical season, just like that," a frustrated Muncey quipped. "System failures, complete collapses, have been our undoing. I just don't understand it. We have the same people—owner, crew, and driver—yet we can't even come close to reaching last year's performance."

Perhaps the season's best battle between Remund and Chenoweth took place during a gray and drizzly Seafair World Championship Trophy race on Lake Washington, when the two raced side-by-side for three heats. Their duel

then continued through the remaining two races of the season at Toledo, Ohio, and then back in Detroit.

When all the points were tallied, *Pay 'N Pak* came out on top by a mere 275 points, giving Dave Heerensperger his first national championship. Although the points race had been close, the record book was one-sided for the new hydro. During the year, *Pay 'N Pak* had shattered 26 of 29 existing speed records.

25 YEARS AGO

The 1998 Season

In 1996 the experts predicted *Miss Budweiser* would be an easy winner, but Dave Villwock and *PICO American Dream* had other ideas and won the title. A year later, with Villwock in the *Budweiser* cockpit for much of the season, *Budweiser* squeaked out a national title over Steve Woomer's *Close Call*. There would be little drama in 1998, however. *Budweiser* and Villwock went into the season as the clear favorite, and had no trouble living up to that forecast.

Perhaps a change in the starting procedure helped? Flag starts and assigned lanes had been used for the previous seven seasons, which often meant that *Budweiser* would not begin a race in its preferred spot. But, for 1998, the sport returned to tradition and let the drivers fight for lanes.

Another difference came in the team's primary rival. At the end of the 1997 season, Woomer flirted with the



Ed Krupinski

The U-2 raced under many different names in 1998, including *ARC Construction*, the name it had at the season-opener in Evansville, Indiana. Steve David drove it to second place in the final standings.

idea of giving up on his pursuit of beating Bernie Little, then went in the other direction. He hired *Budweiser* crew chief Ron Brown and planned for a 1998 season that would be bigger than ever. But, unfortunately, Woomer died of a heart attack in late April and all of those ideas went by the wayside. *Budweiser's* chief threat would instead come from Fred Leland, who had built two new boats for the season, and a hydro that would carry seven different names.

The *Budweiser* team used the same strategy and the same pair of hydroplanes they had the year before. For each race they'd roll into the pits with two boats and then decide which one they'd use on race day. Hull #9501 (also known as T-3) was older but had been the bigger winner the year before, while its nearly identical partner, Hull #9712 (or T-5), was heavily damaged during an accident

at the Tri-Cities and missed much of the campaign. It was now fixed and ready for action as the 1998 season got underway in Evansville, Indiana.

The older of the two got the nod at that first race and easily won every heat it entered. It also was an easy winner at the Gold Cup in Detroit. In both cases, the second-place winner was a boat entered by Jim Harvey and driven by Steve David. Third place at Evansville went to Mitch Evans in *Appian Jeronimo*, the same boat that won the Seattle race the year before as *PICO American Dream*, while third-place honors at the Gold Cup went to Nate Brown in the 10-year-old *Llumar*.

High river levels forced the postponement of the race in Madison, Indiana, to Labor Day weekend, which then left only the event in Norfolk, Virginia, to wrap up the initial Eastern swing. For some reason that race was scheduled to take place the week before the Tri-Cities event—on the opposite side of the continent. As a consequence, only six teams showed up in Virginia and the race was easily won by the newer *Budweiser*.

A week later on the Columbia River, the biggest surprise was the showing by Jimmy King aboard *Miss E-Lam Plus*. He won two of his preliminary heats, but was third in final behind Villwock in the older *Budweiser* and Nate Brown in *Llumar*. *Appian Jeronimo* was the sec-



Bill Taylor

Fred Leland entered three different boats with the name *PICO American Dream*.



ABOVE: The *Miss Budweiser* team took two boats to most races during the season and entered the one they thought would perform best. Here, the hull rebuilt the year before and known as T-5 prepares to make a run on the Detroit River. **LEFT:** Dave Villwock hoists the Gold Cup trophy in celebration of his victory in 1998.



ond-fastest qualifier with a run of over 160 mph but was washed down at the start of the final.

The event in Kelowna, British Columbia, was perhaps the most interesting of the year. Villwock failed to win his first heat since Detroit then got into a verbal exchange with Steve David, who he accused of running him wide toward the spectator fleet. After a flurry of penalties in the final, it appeared that David won the race, but then a lane violation call against Mark Evans was rescinded that instead gave Evans the victory with *PICO American Dream*.

Miss Budweiser was back in its customary place in the winner's circle when the boats raced in Seattle the next weekend, though. Villwock was piloting the newer of the two red boats as Steve David escaped injury when his boat, named *Fred-die's Club* for this contest, went over after catching a roller in the north turn. Mark Evans finished second in *PICO American Dream*.

Seven boats made the trek back to Madison for the second attempt at the Indiana Governor's Cup and this time the conditions were normal. The result was familiar, too—another victory for the older *Budweiser*.

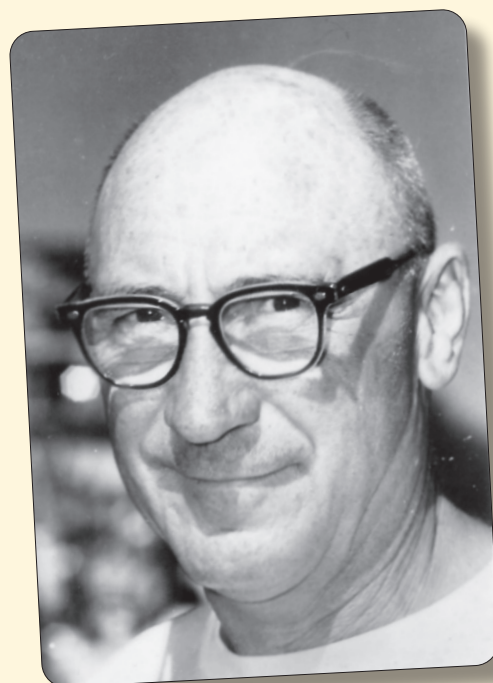
Next came San Diego, which provided the debut for a new race team. Kim Gregory of Las Vegas had purchased the boat and equipment from Steve Woomer's estate, hired Jim Lucero to get the hydro ready for racing, and asked Mark Weber to do the driving. Named *Wildfire*, the boat took fourth-place honors while Villwock took another easy victory, this time with the newer hull. With that victory, Villwock not only clinched his second national title, but also clinched the national championship for his *Budweiser* race team—with two more races yet to go.

Only six boats showed up for the next contest in Las Vegas, which Villwock claimed while driving the older *Budweiser*, then the fleet was shipped to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, for the season-ender. Both Villwock and Mitch Evans jumped the gun in the final heat, which gave the victory to Mark Weber in *Wildfire*.

Budweiser's performance in 1998 could be described only as dominating, and with hardly a glimmer of suspense for race fans. Villwock and his two boats thoroughly defeated everyone, and the season chase was never close. When the points were tallied, Steve David and his many-named hydro was a far-distant second place, 7,402 points behind. The third-place boat, *Appian Jeronimo* and Mitch Evans, had fewer than half the points that the *Budweiser* team had collected. ❖

HURRYING HICKLING

Chuck Hickling was a complete boat racer—driver, designer, builder, owner, and craftsman. He was a virtual fixture in Pacific Northwest hydroplane circles who was known for his competitive exploits as well as for being a superb wood butcher—a term applied to those few talented individuals who can shape pulp and plywood into any form imaginable. More than once on racing waters, a boat had gone sideways in a corner, returned to the dock with sponson or chine in disarray, and Hickling came to the rescue. A cut here, trim there, and before your very eyes a nifty repair was done—always clean and probably stronger than it was before. The following interview was conducted by Sharon Gamble and published in the June 1975 issue of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*.



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

UNJ: When did you begin boat racing? How did you get involved?

Hickling: I started by building my own outboard hydroplane when I was 16 years old. I raced outboards for about 20 years, then built an inboard hydro and started racing in 1950.

What was the first Unlimited you drove? When? Where?

That was *Slo-mo IV*, testing it back in 1955. The first I raced was *Miss Seattle* in 1957, at Lake Chelan for John Anderson and Milo Stoen. We were all

pretty new at this business and didn't get very far that day.

Can you verbalize for us laymen how it feels to drive an Unlimited?

Driving an Unlimited is very pleasant. They ride over the water smoothly, even in rough conditions because they are so big and heavy. Racing them in close competition is much different because handling them in closed areas, with limited vision, and other boats so close at high speeds, makes a guy quite nervous.

How were you selected to drive *Miss Seattle* in 1957? Were you a member of Roostertails, Inc., the syndicate which sponsored the U-37?

No, I was not a member, but a good friend of mine, Burns Smith, was the crew chief and he asked Al Benson, and myself, to come down and try the boat out. I was selected because I got good results with less equipment damage.

During the 1959 Apple Cup you drove *Miss Pay 'n Save*, U-47. There was wind and a shortened race. What was it

like that day?

This was a very fast race between the *Miss Bardahl* with Jack Regas, the *Tempest* with Bill Brow, and myself. In fact, we all had about the same points scored up to the final heat, except I had the fastest elapsed time at 109 mph, which was a record for a long time. The boat I was driving, was a nose diver. The strut was too deep, which pushed the nose under if you didn't keep plenty of air under the boat. In this case there was plenty of wind and the boat was riding good in rough water, so there was not too much trouble in keeping competitive. Of course, we won that day.

You also drove Bill Schuyler's \$ Bill. He was always tinkering with stock equipment. What are your memories and feelings about this?

That was a very pleasant experience working with two swell guys: Bill and his brother Al. The boat was a good one to drive. And as far as their tinkering went, they were trying to make the first Hillborn fuel-injection system work. I can't say it worked too good, but I could always get it to run. The three of us campaigned the boat for a season alone, and were successful.

In '67, while driving the *Harrah's*



George Carikonen



Bob Carver Photos



Bob Carver Photos

TOP: The first Unlimited Chuck Hickling drove in competition was *Miss Seattle* in 1957.

MIDDLE: Hickling's only race victory came in the cockpit of *Miss Pay'n Save* at the 1959 Apple Cup in Chelan, Washington.

ABOVE: The *Tempest* takes a bounce as Hickling drives it at the 1961 Gold Cup in Reno

Club, you were involved in an accident with Notre Dame.

Yes, this was a very, very powerful boat powered with a two-stage Allison, with a small Buick engine driving the second stage supercharger. We had worked “bugs” out of the combination and found the right gear ratio and propeller to make the boat accelerate very rapidly. So, at the start of the first heat when Jack Regas lost control of his boat, and was flipped out, the boat took a dive in front of me. With the acceleration I had there was no way to avoid the *Notre Dame*. My boat went over the top, rolled over in midair, and tossed me out.

Also in 1967, you designed the PARCO O-Ring Miss. What new concepts were incorporated? How did it differ from a Jones, Staudacher, or Karelson hull of that time?

The hull had a lower deck crown, giving it a low-profile look. Also, it was the first wide-transom hull, with the propeller even with the back of the transom. This allowed one to shorten the afterplane and lengthen the forward plane, making the hull more stable like a longer boat.

What was it like driving the four-seater Budweiser? Did you ever take any celebrities for rides?

The boat was the same design as the *\$ Bill and Pay 'n Save*, except you sat in the seat to the left side of the cockpit. It was powered with a worn-out Allison, so it didn't go too fast. I had a lot of fun with the boat and ran it in every race of the circuit that year. I took Guy Lombardo out a couple of times, and “The Virginian” James Drury out in Seattle.

Who is your most unforgettable



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

character in Unlimited racing?

There are quite a few unforgettable people in Unlimited competition. Bill Cantrell is probably one of the greatest ever. He's always willing to give you a

CHUCK HICKLING'S DRIVING STATISTICS

YEAR	BOAT	RACE RESULTS					HEAT RESULTS						
		RACES	1st	2nd	3rd	DNQ	START	DNS	FINISH	1st	Pct.	Top 3	Pct.
1957	Miss Seattle	4	0	0	0	0	8	3	3	0	0.000	1	0.333
1958	Miss Seattle	4	0	0	0	0	9	0	6	0	0.000	3	0.500
1959	Miss Pay 'n Save	3	1	0	0	0	7	0	6	2	0.333	3	0.500
	Miss Spokane	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0.000	0	0.000
1960	Miss Burien	4	0	1	1	0	12	0	11	1	0.091	8	0.727
1961	Miss Burien	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	0.000	2	1.000
	Tempest	2	0	1	0	0	6	0	6	1	0.167	4	0.667
1962	Tempest	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	1	0.500	2	1.000
1963	Tempest	2	0	1	0	0	6	0	5	1	0.200	4	0.800
1964	Miss Budweiser	5	0	1	0	0	12	0	11	2	0.182	8	0.727
	Miss Michelob	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0.000	1	0.500
1965	Miss Budweiser	9	0	1	0	1	18	1	18	1	0.056	13	0.722
1966	Miss Busch Bavarian	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0.000	1	0.500
	\$ Bill	2	0	1	0	0	5	0	4	2	0.500	4	1.000
1967	Harrah's Club	5	0	1	0	0	11	0	6	1	0.167	6	1.000
1972	Smyth the Smoother Mover	2	0	0	0	0	4	1	2	0	0.000	0	0.000
1973	Bob Murphy's Marine	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0.000	0	0.000
	Ms. Greenfield Galleries	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0.000	1	0.333
1975	Oh Boy! Oberto	2	0	0	0	1	3	0	2	0	0.000	1	0.500
1978	Tempus	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0.000	0	0.000
1979	Tempus	2	0	0	0	0	6	0	6	1	0.167	2	0.333
	TOTALS	55	1	7	1	2	124	7	98	13	0.133	64	0.653

hand when you've got a problem. And the way he can smell out a fresh watermelon is really something. And another real guy was Bill Waggoner. Stan Sayres may have invented Unlimited racing, but Waggoner developed it. With all his money, he was still a friend and a great guy.

What about your most memorable, or frightening, experience in the boats?

One of the most memorable, and frightening, happened in San Diego. It was the first race held there, in 1964. I was driving the second *Budweiser*, or the former *Maverick*. I had won the first heat with a 115-mph average. During the second lap of the second heat, I was dueling side by side at better than 165. The left sponson came off my boat. Needless to say, things were very interesting for a while.

Who do you rate as the top five drivers? What special qualities did, or do they possess?

Fred Alter is cool and calm, a driver that gets the most out of the equipment. Bill Muncey is a smart driver and does real well when he has good equipment. Ron Musson was hard driving, he never gave up. Bill Stead was probably the greatest charger. Dean Chenoweth is smart, a little driver who likes to go fast. But it would be interesting to see how he would do with not-so-good gear.

Are there any particular rule changes you would like to see in racing today [1975]?

The only rule I would like to see amended is the crossover distance between boats on the straightaways. But rules to govern the Unlimited Commission, other than actual racing rules, could and should be completely rewritten. Put the decisions back in the membership of owners and drivers. Also eliminate the outside control of promotional interests that take 12 percent of any profit for doing nothing.

What about your new boat?

I started the hull in the fall of 1972. It is a picklefork with a 25-foot center



Sandy Ross Collection



Sandy Ross Collection



Bob Carver Photos

TOP: Hickling drove the former *Maverick*, renamed *Miss Budweiser*, in 1964.
MIDDLE: He stayed with the *Budweiser* team in 1965 and drove their four-seater hydroplane.
ABOVE: He saw action in the *Bill* in 1966.



TOP: Hickling and Harrah's Club go flying during his accident at the 1967 Gold Cup on Lake Washington. **MIDDLE:** Ms. Greenfield Galleries in 1973. **ABOVE:** Hickling built Tempus himself and drove it in 1978 and 1979.

body, 28 feet long, 12 feet wide, 78-inch air trap, wide transom, seven-degree shaft angle, total weight about 5,600 pounds. It's the same profile as the Miss U.S. with primary and secondary sponson planes. The hull is wood framed, with aluminum skins.

Any surprises? Innovations? What about the power plant? Will you drive?

No new innovations, just designed in configuration and construction for competition. Power will be a turbo-charged, gasoline-carbureted Rolls-Royce. Maybe I'll drive if I can't get a good driver I want. I've no crew yet, but there will be only three of us to run it. Hope to test at Lake Chelan late this summer. Won't race 'til ready.

Will you seek a sponsorship?

No. I don't believe in sports being sponsored for advertising.

What do you see as the future of Unlimited racing?

Until Unlimited racing is not used for advertising, and the control of the sport is put back in the hands of the owners and drivers, the sport will continue to go downhill. Like it is now. ❖

Farewell, Ken. I will never forget you.

KEN WARBY: May 9, 1939 – February 20, 2023

BY BAYDEN GARDAM

The world will remember Ken Warby for his amazing feats: Holding the unlimited world water speed record for almost 45 years, so far. Designing, building, and piloting his boat *Spirit of Australia*. This was an amazing decade of Ken's life, but there was so much more to him.

He was an adventurous teenager, reaching the highest honor of being a Queens Scout. He was a successful lubricants engineer. He was a fierce competitor in Australian circuit-boat racing in the '70s.

After setting the records, he was a great ambassador for the Advance Australia Program, personally appointed by then Prime Minister Malcom Fraser. He toured America for 12 months with *Spirit of Australia*, promoting Australia long before Paul Hogan put another shrimp on the Barbie.

The majority of the '80s Ken owned and operated a very popular drag racing demonstration team. He had two jet-powered dragsters, two jet-powered



Ken Warby in the cockpit of *Spirit of Australia*. On October 8, 1978, he drove the boat to 317.6 mph, a world's water speed record that still holds today.

funny cars, and a Ford LTL 9000 road tractor/truck fitted with the engine from an F-4 Phantom fighter jet. He toured several countries, including an annual trip to Australia and most areas of the USA.

In the late '80s he spotted a business opportunity. Australia had mini concrete delivery trucks and America did not. Ken shipped barrels from Australia, got special gearboxes built, and fitted up Hino trucks. He operated this business until recently.

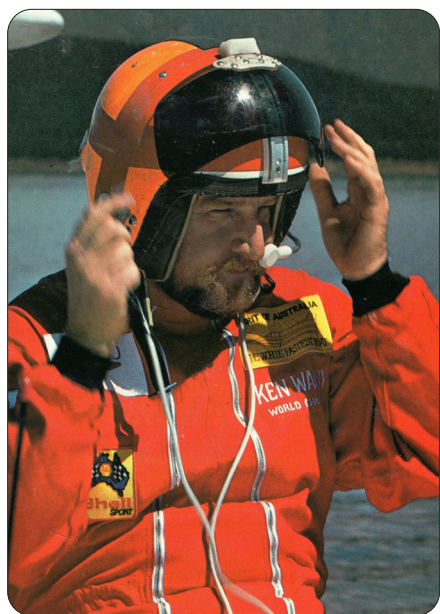
From 2005, Ken and his wife, Barbara, put together a collection of vintage Australian displacement racing boats. Together they competed on the APBA vintage racing circuit. At 78 years old, Ken was still driving his 21-foot Evercraft boat *Fury* like an out-of-control teenager. *Fury* has a 605-cubic-inch Chevy with a 14-71 supercharger, 1100 Bhp, and capable of 140 mph.

All that about Ken is amazing and there is so much more.

To me, having known of him and met him on many occasions since 1968, when I was nine years old, I am so proud to call Ken my closest friend for the last 25 years. The thousands of hours we have spent working on boats together, traveling together, and attending dozens of boat-race events together, will always be the highlight of my life.

I spent most of 2005 to 2011 in Cincinnati with Ken and Barbara. Besides the achievements and records, as we say in Australia, Ken was just a "Great Bloke." Ken was a very a generous man, always first to pay the check, always generous with his time to anyone that wanted him. He was a funny bugger. His smile, laugh, and happiness were contagious.

So many of us are better people because we met Ken Warby. ❖



From the author's collection

From the author's collection

\$ENIOR \$AYS

Feeding Your Hydro Habit by Bob Senior



A guide to help hydro fans spend their hobby money.

PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING THE SEAFAIR BOAT CLUB. You can volunteer on the Seafair Race Team, and also enjoy social activities with like-minded people. Annual dues are \$30. For more information, contact Steve Levy at stevenl20@aol.com

THE NEXT HYDROPLANE MUSEUM ONLINE AUCTION will be held in the last week in May. There will be many desirable collectibles offered. Please be sure to visit <https://thunderboats.mae-stroweb.com> and support a good cause.

FIFTY 5 YEARS, A PERSONAL HISTORY OF UNLIMITED HYDROPLANE RACING.

Five years ago, 1,000 copies of Bill Osborne's book sold out. He has reprinted it, adding new chapters on Jimmy Shane, J. Michael Kelly, the Tate family,

and Bill Cahill. He also added many new personality profiles. The 360-page book contains over 500 color photos. The book sells for \$78 postage-paid. Checks or money orders only, payable to Bill Osborne, 106 River View Dr., Lyle, WA 98635.

BEST OF THUNDERBOAT RACING, BY STEVEN GAREY. This book contains little-known facts and rip-roaring stories from the fascinating archives of the fastest racing boats in the world. Author Garey depicts the rich history of the sport from a fresh viewpoint. 163 pages, hundreds of color and black and white photos. \$15.95 postage-paid. Send your check payable to Steven Garey, P.O. Box 989, Mt. Clemens, MI 48046.

SEAFAIR HYDROPLANE COMMEMORATIVE BUTTON SERIES. This is a series of three -inch buttons showing action photos of your favorite Unlimiteds. It started in 1973 with the *Slo-mo-shun IV* and includes *Shanty*, *Maverick*, *Thriftway*, *Bardahl*, *Miss U.S.*, *Miss Madison*, and many other popular favorites. For more information, contact Steve Levy (again) at stevenl20@aol.com

AND, MAY I TOOT MY OWN HORN?

I have an enormous supply of extra Seafair pins and metal executive pins for sale. I can help you fill holes in your collection. For a price list, please contact me via email at bob.senior37@hotmail.com.

That will be all until next time. ❖

HYDROFILE

Race Team News by Lon Erickson



Miss Madison Racing

Crewmembers Cindy Shirley and Pat Berryman had the U-1 *Miss HomeStreet* out for a day doing display duty at Naval Station Everett, north of Seattle.



Cindy Shirley

Go3 Racing

Work continues on Ed Cooper's Allison V-12s, prepping for the 2023 season.



Go3 Racing

Strong Racing

Both Strong Racing hulls are in the later stages of completion for 2023, getting ready for testing in the Tri-Cities on June 2. The U-8 *Beacon Electric* completed a successful trailer fire recently (two photos below) and the U-9 *Beacon Plumbing* is out of the paint shop and systems are going back into the hull (bottom photo).



Strong Racing photos

U-11 Unlimited Racing Group

Legend Yacht Transport is excited to return to the world of H1 Unlimited racing as the title sponsor for the Unlimited Racing Group. The company will sponsor the U-11 hydroplane at Guntersville, Madison, Tri-Cities, and San Diego.

LEGEND

 | yacht transport

Wiggins Racing

Work continues on the U-27 Wiggins Racing. Charley Wiggins, Dave Villwock, and Chris Martin, among others, are aiming at having the boat on the water this season.



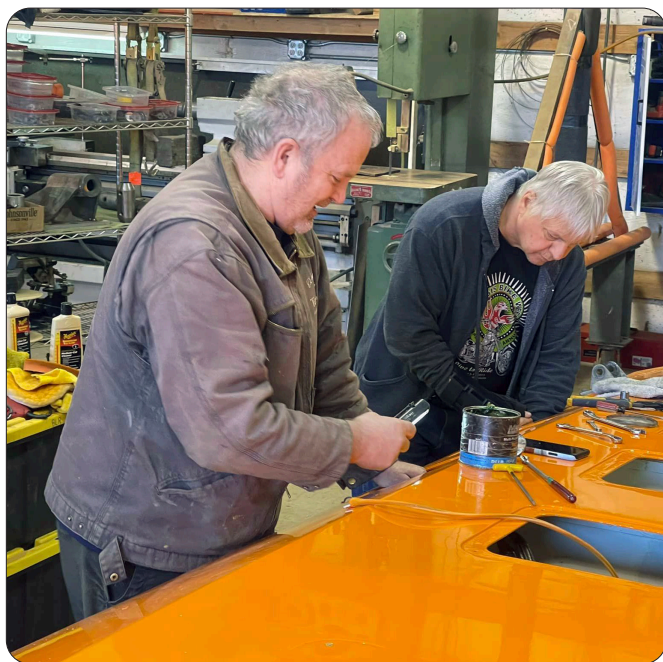
Chris Martin

Water Follies Spring Testing, Lampson Pits, Kennewick, Friday, June 2.

Some details are starting to be shared about the testing session coming up the first Friday in June. Though we don't have all the complete commitments from the teams, it is sounding like there could be between seven to nine Unlimiteds participating. Several teams have major rebuilds or updates to be tested, drivers in different boats, and new drivers to be certified and qualified to run in the Unlimited class. In addition, Water Follies officials tell us that HARM and the Grand Prix hydros will be part of testing.

Bucket List Racing

The U-40 has been painted with its primary Tennessee orange and is awaiting vinyl graphics. Dan Walters and Bob Burks (below) have been getting the steering and other systems back in the boat. Off-season engine work is wrapped up and the engines will also be going back into the hull for testing. Meanwhile, crew chief Mike Lemler and new team driver Brent Hall (right) have been busy on the 440 and the last stages of prep work is wrapping up. Both the U-40 and 440 are expected to be in Tri-Cities for the June 2 testing session.



Dustin Echols photos

Bucket List Racing photos

MY \$0.02 WORTH

Editorial Comment by Andy Muntz



Imagine that you're the head honcho in charge of putting on the annual hydroplane race in your town. You're working on the schedule for the weekend's activities and you realize that you have a choice.

On Saturday afternoon of your event, you'll have either of two options: You can have two preliminary heats that will lead to the continuation of the race on Sunday, or you can have a stand-alone race on Saturday that, depending on how many boats show up for your event, will give you at least five heats of racing.

Which would you pick? Seems like a no-brainer, right? You'll want to give your ticket-buying fans the biggest bang for their bucks—the event with the greater amount of racing action.

Last month I discussed change—something that can sometimes be uncomfortable, but is also necessary for anything to improve. This sport is a prime example. It started with a race up and down a river, then evolved into a

circle race. It began with the winner determined by a complicated handicapping formula, and eventually evolved into a competition where the winner was the first boat across the finish line of the final heat. It began as a millionaire's hobby, and evolved into commercialized sport with sponsors and prize money.

As the sport continues on its evolutionary journey, change continues to happen to meet the public's transforming tastes. H1 Unlimited went through a long-range planning process early in 2021 and conducted a survey later that year to identify what fans think of the sport. From that effort came several initiatives, including a plan to enhance the fan experience by reducing down time between heats and developing a race format that gives competitors an incentive to make a full effort in all heats.

The result was the match-race format that was tried for the first time last season.

Its purpose was to give fans some-

thing different on Saturday than what they would see on Sunday (and perhaps buy tickets for both days). It wasn't a revolutionary idea. Other motorsports—Formula 1, NASCAR, IndyCar—are doing the same thing for the same reason.

The idea of match races was pitched to the race site representatives and to the boat owners, and they liked it. What's more, after the match races were held last summer, the fans seemed to like it, too.

Then, the Facebook trolls went to work. Perhaps fearing change, perhaps secretly hoping that H1 will fail at whatever it does, they did their best to tear down the idea. The match races didn't look like the races they remembered as a child, they complained.

So, I must ask. Should H1 look backward or forward? Should the sport always be the way it was a half century ago, as some on Facebook seem fond of suggesting? Or, should the sport be willing to change, do things differently, and evolve with the times? ❖

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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

2 p.m. on Sunday, May 21, 2023

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