



# 2012; The Swami

## Attempts to Predict an all too Short Season

We once again go into an unlimited season with far more teams than races. Another short six race season is on tap for 2012. Seemed like not too long ago we had lots of races, but no teams. Now, we have plenty of competitive teams but race sites seem hard to come by. Both events last season in Sacramento, CA and Washington DC have yet to yield the results all fans want, which is more racing! Another exhibition run is scheduled for this season as the unlimiteds stage a run in Coeur d'Alene, ID. With the northwest a perennial hotbed of hydro teams, fans, and sponsors let's hope this town in northern Idaho can put it all together.



The scant six race season kicks off July 6th- 8th in Madison, Indiana then stops in Detroit, MI; Tri-Cities, WA.; Seattle, WA.; San Diego, CA., and at finally Doha, Qatar in November. Along the way fans are going to see some great racing. There is competition and speed aplenty in 2012, but as with most seasons a couple of teams rise above the rest of the field. As has been the case the last few years the two teams to beat are the U-1 *Spirit of Qatar 96* driven by all time win leader Dave Villwock and the U-6 *Oh Boy! Oberto* driven by Steve David. Last season Villwock regained the season point title he had been denied in 2010. This year he seeks to repeat his crown and add another Gold Cup to his impressive list of accomplishments. But Steve David will not make it easy for him. The 2010 champ wants his title back and the Gold Cup that has eluded him. The remainder of the field will be a few ticks behind but should both these teams stumble there will be a pack of boats ready to pick up the pieces.

The most noise in the off season was made by Matt Gregory/USA Racing Partners and his former U-10 hull which now sports Degree Men as a sponsor. Throw in Scott Liddycoat as driver and you've got a serious challenger. Also rising to the top after last season is Kip Brown in the Nate Brown led Our Gang Racing team's U-17 *Red Dot* which led the point standings early on. Over at Precision Performance Engineering LLC, the three boat team has been pared down to one with Graham Trucking staying on as sponsor with yet another wild paint scheme. Jeff Bernard is out and Jimmy Shane is in for this ride. The U-57 was sold to the Evans brothers who will campaign it as *Formulaboats.com* with Mark Evans handling the driving as he did in 2011. J.W. Meyers returns in Scott Rainey's U-11 sponsored by Peters & May which should show more speed this year.

Other teams expected to make appearances on the circuit this year include Brian Perkins in the U-21 *Albert Lee*, Mike Webster in his U-22, Dave Bartush and his U-13, and Leland Racing continues after Fred Leland's passing with Gregg Hopp in the U-100. Returning for a full time ride are Jon Zimmerman in Mike and Lori Jones U-9 and this year's experiment will be Kelly Stocklin in his U-18, a converted G class boat with a T-53 turbine. All other teams use a T-55. Time will tell on Kelly's Bucket List Racing. Dr. Ken Muscatel has no boat again this year, but if you know him he's looking.

As for the racing itself, which set of rules will be used for the starting procedure will probably evolve on a race by race basis. In a recent interview with Mike Noonan, he talks about everything from new GPS units placed in the boats with a minimum speed of 100 mph during the 5 minute periods, to random draws for lanes. So when the boats arrive in Madison it hopefully will be worked out.

Regardless of all this the season will once again cram four races into a five week span, and then weeks off to run two more races. An exhibition run has also been scheduled for Lake Coeur d'Alene in northern Idaho over Labor Day in hopes of a real race returning in 2013. I'm ready to go already.

## The Crystal Ball Tells All . . .

### TITLE CONTENDERS

1) U-1 *Spirit of Qatar 96*, Dave Villwock, driver 65 career wins  
Ellstrom Family, owner 26 career wins



**Swami Sez:** Back in the saddle again as the high point champion. The fastest boat on the circuit is preparing to stay that way. How can you honestly bet against this team? The winningest driver in the sports history is zeroing in 70 wins. Unless something freakish happens early on this team will once again clinch the title at the final race of this short season. Expect 4 wins if not 5 and another championship, the Gold Cup and fastest qualifying speeds at most events.

2) U-6 *Oh Boy Oberto*, Steve David 14 career wins  
City of Madison, Ind. 15 career wins



**Swami Sez:** Will be nipping at the heels of the U-1 all season long, if a mistake is made this team will be the one who benefits. Steve David is still driving at the top of his game and Mike Hanson & crew still prepare a top notch boat. They will make it to the winners circle twice and be there in every final heat. It's doubtful they will ever finish lower than third.

3) 88 *Degree Men*, Scott Liddycoat, 1 career win.  
Matt Gregory, 0 career wins



**Swami Sez:** This team kind of appeared out of left field but has got the credentials to finish third this season. Headquartered out of the old Bud shop owner Matt Gregory, son of the late Kim Gregory put the old U-10 back together, signed the 2011 rookie

of the year in Liddycoat and “acquired” a big time sponsor in Degree. Pre season testing has been done giving them a leg up on most of the competition. Expect good things when the team gets to Madison, as in solid speeds, great finishes in the prelims and appearances in 5 of 6 final heats.

## Some Serious Speed Here

4) U-17 *Red Dot Corp.*, Kip Brown, 0 career wins  
Nate Brown, 5 career wins (driver), 0 career wins (owner)

**Swami Sez:** The big surprise team of 2011 had to be this small operation from Preston, Wa which is proving a whole bunch of enthusiastic guys led by a knowledgeable owner can go a long way. The boat showed all kinds of speed and led the point chase for the first few races as the favorites stumbled. If ever a real underdog has a shot at winning a race this year it’s these guys. A quick start with no problems is what they need.

## A Small Step Back

5) U-5 *Graham Trucking*, Jimmy Shane, 0 career wins  
Precision Performance Engineering LLC, 6 career wins

**Swami Sez:** A fast hull prepared by an experienced crew will put this team near the top but not over it. Jimmy Shane has yet to have that breakout “aha!” race that makes people take notice. It will be fast and reliable enough to pile up some points and make a good share of final heats but with the current competition it’s tough to see them finish any higher than third in a final. (They are running last year’s U-7 as the U-5 this season)

6) U-11 *Peters & May*, J.W. Meyers, 1 career wins  
Scott Raney, 0 career wins

**Swami Sez:** After a bit of a disappointing rookie season this team returns with more testing to get after it sooner. We should see solid qualifying performances and will be in at least 3 final heats. A victory would be nice but it won’t happen this season.

7) No. 37 *Schumacher Racing*, J. Michael Kelly, 1 career win  
Billy and Jane Schumacher, 4 career wins

**Swami Sez:** Big shake up at this team as the sponsor walks to another team and takes their number with them. Crew chemistry will play a key part with a hull that still hasn’t reached its potential. J. Michael Kelly is one of the best drivers around today and will take this team to good preliminary heats and a couple of surprise finishes in the finals but a gremlin or two which plagued them in 2011 will not allow them to finish higher than this in the standings.



## Not Quite as Speedy

8) U-100 Leland Racing, Greg Hopp, 0 career wins.  
Leland Racing team, 20 career wins

**Swami Sez:** The team will carry on after the death of the great sportsman and innovator Fred Leland. As usual this team is hard to get a handle on. At times there are flashes of brilliance and other times well, not much. The team needs consistency more than anything else. A couple of surprise finals and some frustration will highlight this team in 2012.



9) U-57 Formula, Mark Evans 10 career win  
Evans Brothers Racing, 0 career wins

**Swami Sez:** Here's a dark horse with a proven driver and a crew with lots of hydro knowledge. It should finish quite a few heats but will probably be done after the prelims if some consistency can be found. Maybe a final heat with attrition to the top dogs but I don't see them challenging for wins in the prelims, much less the final.



## Fun to Watch

10) U-9 Jones Racing, Jon Zimmerman, 0 career wins  
Mike & Lori Jones 2 career wins.

**Swami Sez:** The Jones return to the circuit full time with their battle tested hull and a talented driver. Only problem is the hull looks past its prime and is quite a few mph behind the leaders. May make a final or two but will be done after the prelims.



11) U-22 Webster Racing, Mike Webster, 0 career wins  
Webster Family, 0 career wins

**Swami Sez:** The team from Pennsylvania will be back with another flashy paint job for a back marker. Mike Webster has greatly improved as a driver but his ride won't put him anywhere near the top of the heap. Most likely done after the prelims but with all the hard work the crew puts in a surprise race where they make the final is not out of the question.



**12)** U-21 Go Fast, Turn Left Racing, Brian Perkins, 0 career wins  
Greg O'Farrell, 0 career wins

**Swami Sez:** A solid contender, but just a few mph off the top dogs but always performs well at the northwest events. Perkins driving gets better every year and he is still young and has not reached his full potential. The owner is enthusiastic and this boat will see good but not great qualifying speeds and will be one of the "bubble" boats struggling to make the final heat at the two races it will attend.



**13)** U-18 Bucket List Racing, Kelly Stocklin, 0 career wins  
Kelly Stocklin, 0 career wins

**Swami Sez:** Here is the grand experiment for 2012. A T-53 turbine and a former GP boat and driver. The boat is too small and light and the engine not powerful enough to compete. It may make some okay speeds in qualifying but in race conditions with rough water this will be a handful that will be lucky to finish. If it does finish it will be lucky to be on the same lap as the leaders.



**(14)** U-13 Spirit of Detroit, Cal Phipps, 0 career wins  
Dave Bartush, 1 career win

**Swami Sez:** The "Old" boat is scheduled to race in just the Detroit Gold Cup, but . . . Bartush teamed up with Dr. Ken Muscatel, who has no boat, and will run the whole season. A major overhaul was done this winter, but we don't expect much out of the 25-year old hull and rookie driver.



## What About

**15)** U-3 Go3 Racing; Still collecting dust I assume.

### 2012 Hydro Fever In Memory of Fred Leland

Several of Fred's drivers were on hand. Standing in front of the U-77 *Miss Wahoo* from left to right are; Scott Pierce, Mark Evans, Chip Hanauer, Jack Barrie, Fred's ex-wife Jackie Leland, Greg Hopp, Jeff Bernard, Nate Brown, J. W. Myers, and Jerry Hale.

~ Karl Pearson photo

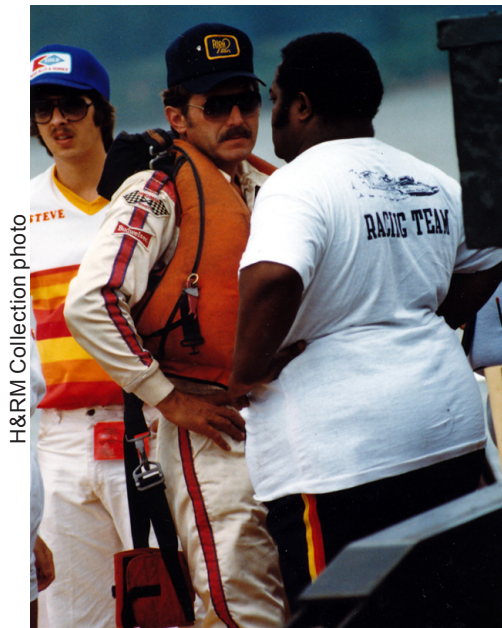


# The John Humes Story

## Part 3 by Craig Fjarlie

In parts one and two, John Humes talked about his early years with the *Miss Madison* team, the new boat in 1972 and purchase of the former *Pay 'n Pak* in 1978, his promotion to crew chief, and the 1981 trip to Acapulco. This month, in part three, Humes talks about drivers, race sites, Bob Hughes, and touches on the state of unlimited racing. Craig Fjarlie conducted the interview in 2000.

**In 1982, Milner Irvin went to drive *Miss Renault*. Ron Snyder returned to the *Miss Madison* team that year. How was he to work with?**



H&RM Collection photo

Ron Snyder and Big John Humes, with back turned to camera, talk things over (1982).

Ron was good to work with. As a basic boat driver, Ron was a good driver. He always kept in tune with what we had, you know, the equipment we had and what you can expect out of it. If it wasn't good, we told him going in, "Hey, don't try to do anything crazy 'cause this won't work." Ron was a good guy. We can talk about the conflict with the new boat (1988—ed.). I was still a Board member at the time, didn't agree with the choices that happened in Pasco. Bob Hughes and I had a few words but I stand to the point, I can say yet today that I didn't agree with that, I told Bob that. We came back and when all the hoopla was going on about letting Snyder go, I stayed neutral. I don't know to this day what brought that on. Ron and I never talked about it. He always knew where I stood. Like I say, it wasn't my choice to get in an argument like that. That's not my cup of tea, even though I was a Board member. Being a brand new boat he should've had a shot, and then it was really unfortunate that they blew it over in San Diego.

**A lot of guys have gone over in that spot.**

Oh, sure, and they'll continue to go over there. It's just the way the wind blows. Nothin' you're gonna do about that. Change the course site, that's the only thing. But Ron was a good driver, had a good family.

**He won at Lake of the Ozarks in 1983.**

That was a good win, and maybe it was a fluke, but it was a win. That year we built 10 Allison motors. And back then, I mean, you ran hard. Parts were getting scarce but we built 10 motors. . . . When it got down to the final race of the year I think we ended up borrowing one in Houston, another motor from Jim Sedam, to have two to go to Houston. Then we got down there and we tore the side out of the boat and had to work on it.

**Another driver we haven't talked about was Andy Coker. He wasn't around very long.**

I think he only lasted a season. I think they let him go in Oklahoma. And gosh, who came back after that?

## Must've been Ron.

Yeah, 'cause that was the *Pak* boat. A lot of people, you know, you can tell when a guy's gonna be a good driver. And some of these guys, they were scared.

## Didn't know how fast they were going to go.

Right.

## And how big the roostertails were.

Didn't realize what it was, you know. Jump back to Sheehy real quick. He drove the *Natural Light* and drove the pants off that thing.

## Yeah, he did.

Drove the pants off it. And what was the difference in running the *Natural Light* than *Miss Madison*?

## Maybe the way the boat handled? Didn't feel comfortable...



H&RM Collection photo

1985 American Speedy Printing pilot Andy Coker. He drove one heat (3rd) at Pasco in 1986 the the Madison team.



Tony Bugeja Collection

Milner Irvin III

Oh, here we go with another story. Milner came back and drove for us after Jon Peddie drove the *Pak* boat in Madison and got thrown out. Milner came to Pasco, drove the *Pak* boat for us. We fit him in and everything here but we never got to test here in Madison before we went to Pasco. So we get out there and Bill Muncey comes up and he says, "Milner, this is the forgivingest boat you'll ever drive. Every move you make you think is bad, it's forgiving." So I told Milner what we had. Let's just go out and shake it down testing. He did, and he came back in. We checked everything out, fueled it back up, and I said, "OK, let's go out and qualify." So he went out and qualified, ran like a 113-something. Decent. So Bill Muncey comes down, we checked the boat out, it still had plenty of fuel, let's go out for another run. So (Muncey) says, "Now, Milner, do this and do that." He said, "I'm telling you, this boat will not hurt you." So he goes out and I think we ended up, after it was all said

and done, we went 13, 15, 17, we ended up like a 119 for the day, which was damn good. And Muncey walked away, he says, "I'm not telling him nothin' else." But the *Pak* boat was a good boat and like I said, there again, you learn that the boat, like Muncey said, won't hurt you. I've seen it in a lot of different fashions and it always seemed to come down the right way.

## Now, Snyder did get bit in Evansville that one time.



H&RM Collection photo

Milner Irvin III now behind the wheel of *Miss Madison* at Tri-Cities in 1978 after replacing an injured Jon Peddie.

Yes, but you know...

### **Was he pushing it too hard, or . . .**

Here again, you think back . . .

### **. . . Maybe the boat was just getting too tired to be pushed that hard.**

I think that might've been it. That was getting toward the latter years. That thing was getting tired. I mean, we drove her hard and put 'er away wet a lot of times. But I think that was just one of those flukey things that happened down there.

### **We haven't talked about Jon Peddie, either, as a driver.**

Jon Peddie, in photo at left, still owns a body shop downtown. As Tad (Dean) called him, the puncture and dent repair man. Jon was a stock car driver and a lot of people didn't think he deserved a shot at trying to be an unlimited driver.



H&RM Collection photo

Did we debut him at Miami? We did test, I believe, before we went that year. Tested here. Jon probably would've been a good driver but, ah, Jon was a family man and if the family's not in it, it's not going to happen.

### **His family wasn't into it?**

They weren't in it. His mom and dad, they grew up in Madison, all their lives around some form of racing. But his wife just wasn't for it. And yes, probably would've made a real good driver but after he got thrown out here in Madison, his wife said, "Hey!"

### **He drove a little bit for Cantrell and Heath.**

Yeah, after that, but, I mean, that was a limited deal and it wasn't going fast and it wasn't like they were gonna go out there and do it every weekend. That was a couple years later down the road, too, when they did that. Then after they stuck that thing in Detroit, that was it. The last hurrah.

Jon Peddie drove 1977 & part of 1978.

### **Tell us about some of the race sites, especially some of the places where they only went once or twice. What do you remember about El Dorado, Kansas?**

Off in the sticks a ways. The race course was nice. Pit area was sand, not the best.

### **It was awfully hot the second year.**

Very hot, whew! If you left a tray of tools uncovered, you couldn't pick 'em up. I mean, it was just terribly hot. Probably if it hadn't been so hot it would have been a nice place. You can race at Evansville, go to Detroit and race, but best race site, prejudiced or not, is Madison, Indiana. You sit on the banks, you watch the complete race. You see every aspect of it. Favorite city, Seattle. I love Seattle. Of course, that's the heart of all the teams. I met a lot of people there, and the Kenney family, the way we hooked up with them, it was just like being at home. They were a family-oriented



Steven Goldstrin photo

Ron Snyder driving *Miss Rich Plan* to victory in the Missouri Governor's Cup at Lake Ozark in 1983.



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business and they were family like it used to be, you know. Mom and dad and sisters and brothers and everybody always together. When they did something, they did it together. This is my root, that's my root.

**The sport has lost some sites lately. They lost Hawaii, Norfolk...**

That's the big question. OK, you've got the sponsor, you've got a schedule, you're gonna go racing, and all of a sudden you've lost two races this year. They lost Barrie, they lost Kelowna.

**Yeah, so they lost, really, four sites.**

So now you got a job to do for next year coming up. If we're gonna go back to these people and say, can we work this deal... What's your schedule? I don't have one yet.

We put on a race. Who's paid every year? Madison, Indiana. The small community of 13,000 people. The people that like boat racing, like Seattle people, like Pasco, Washington, those places. Those are your nucleus of people that you better retain. Detroit...

**Yeah, they can't lose those.**

You lose those, you lose Detroit, you lose Madison, they ain't got nothin'.

**Talk about Bob Hughes' influence on the team.**

Bob's been a Godsend to the boat. Tony Steinhart asked Bob to be Chairman of the Board. This was way back when Bob had a small shop, you know. He said, "Well, what's involved?" Not a whole lot, a meeting once-a-month, you know. He jumped on board and it's been good for *Miss Madison*. Some people feel negative about it because, well, it's Bob Hughes' boat. Well, no, it's not Bob Hughes' boat. Bob Hughes is Chairman of the Board. He represents *Miss Madison, Inc.*, with the liaison for the City of Madison. Bob and Carol, not having any kids, they devoted a lot of time and money to *Miss Madison*. Probably more involvement came on when Mike Hanson became driver. Mike was probably the son that Bob never had.



Bob Hughes interviews Sharon Hasson after Mike Hanson and Kellogg's Frosted Flakes win at San Diego's Hydrofest.

**Hmmm.**

Carol passed away, but he loves the boat, he loves *Miss Madison*, though a part of his life is gone with his wife being gone. He is still involved and he'll help us as long as we need help, as long as he's able to help... But like I say, Bob has been great for *Miss Madison* and God, keep him alive 'cause I'm sure there'll come a point when Bob decides to get out. It'll be the end of *Miss Madison*.

**You think so?**

Unless somebody picks up the pieces along the way and I don't know who that would be, to step forward, to take the responsibility.

**It is a big responsibility.**

We've come a long way from debt, uh, we probably should've gotten out years ago. I mean, we were \$200-\$300,000 in debt. A racing team.

**When was that, back in the '80s?**

Back when we got the new boat and crashed it. We should have gotten out, but we had an obligation to the bank and we felt we had an obligation to ourselves and we just kept going and going. We don't owe the bank that much now. It's pennies. We might owe Bernie Little a little bit, \$3 or \$4,000. That's just pieces and parts here and there. But we always pay. We've always paid our way. Always have and I think we always will. I don't think that'll ever change.

**When did you step down as crew chief?**

Charlie (Grooms) took over in '88 when I left. In '88 I said, "Hey, I'm done, boys, I'm dead." We got back to Indiana, got the shop all unloaded—we were in the new shop then—got everything unloaded, and I just got off work. Crew night was Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays in the winter time. Tuesday night they'd seen me go by at 6:00, and I'd blown the horn and kept on going. "Where was John?" "He's gone, John said he was quitting. I guess he was serious." Like I say, I quit but I never lost focus. I'll do anything I can to help them if they're in dire straights and needed somebody to do something. I'd do it, you know. Ronnie Brown taught me a little bit



H&RM Collection photo

1988, Charlie Grooms, the new crew chief on the deck of *Holset Miss Madison* at Tri-Cities.

when we converted the boat to turbine. I was out there helping 'em. So I do know a little bit about it. I feel that the young kids that they have now, working around the shop, let 'em learn the hard way. Let 'em learn like I did. Guide 'em, make sure they do it the right way so you don't have anything crazy happen, but make sure that they learn. Stand back and watch. I had some good years, and like I say, I wish we could go back to where the good years stopped and start all over again and bring 'em into the era that they're in now, but that's not gonna happen.

**How's your health? You had some heart trouble a few years ago.**



Yeah, I had a little stent put in. Doin' real good now.

**Any final comments?**

I'm not here for what John Humes wants, I'm here with *Miss Madison*. That's the big thing. Promote the City of Madison. That's what we did, and I think we've done a good job.

**Thank you, John.**

John Humes was a key player in the development of the Miss Madison team. He passed away on April 4 of this year. I regret he did not live to see the transcripts of the interview in print, but I hope the interview serves as a suitable tribute to his memory. Rest in peace, Big John.

~ Craig Fjarlie



**HydroFile**  
**Lon Erickson**

**U-1.** See shop photos on next page for news and shots of the teams spring work.

**U-5.** PPE LLC are working on equipment prep work for the U-5 *Graham Trucking* and driver **Jimmy Shane** has been in the Decatur shop getting familiar with his new ride for 2012.

**U-6** The *Oh Boy! Oberto/Miss Madison* hull is getting

it's final touches on a new paint job to refresh the "shark" paint scheme from the last couple years. The **Hanson** brothers have had the team motors out west getting "dyno'ed" at the Hydros Inc. dyno facility in Lake Stevens, Wa.

**U-9.** Prep work continues with the "completely refurbished" Jones Racing hull and systems installation. **Jeff Campbell** and crew have test fired the "Madison" motor recently and sponsorship for the circuit is a major focus.

**U-11.** See the shop photos for spring work from the Peters & May shop.

**U-13.** **Dave Bartush's** Spirit of Detroit plans on returning to the circuit for 2012 by combining the resources, equipment, and personnel of the U-13 Detroit Unlimited team and **Ken Muscatel's** Superior Racing group. Work continues on upgrades to the hull in Bartush's Detroit shop with hopes to make the first event in Madison. Tubby's Grilled Subs will be on board as U-13 sponsor for the Gold Cup in Detroit and the combined partnership of Bartush and Muscatel hope to bring more sponsorship for the season. When the team heads west, they will use Muscatel's Seattle shop in the northwest as a base to work from. **Cal Phipps** will return as the primary driver for the U.S. race events.

**U-17.** The *Red Dot/Silver Cloud Inns* tested on Saturday May 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Tri-Cities (see page 18 for photos and details). They checked out the updates and minor changes made over the winter,

along with switching back to the more traditional air intake/cowling.

**U-18.** The new Bucket List Racing project (G class hull with the T-53 turbine), is underway and cover in the H1 Unlimited shop tours recently. **Kelly Stocklin** reported that the goal is to make the Madison event but they have a lot of work yet to do.

**U-37.** What was reported to be the U-12 last month is now the No. 37 Schumacher Racing team. **Bill Cahill** and Beacon Plumbing returns to sponsor this team in 2012 and **J. Michael Kelly** will be driving for the Schumacher's again this season. Off season upgrades to the hull came from things they learned in 2011. They include modifications to the bottom and extending the airtraps, along with changes to the motor mounts.

**88.** See shop photos for news and some of spring work.

**U-100.** The family of **Fred Leland** made the announcement that they will be honoring Fred's wishes that Leland Unlimited compete on the H1 circuit in 2012. The team will run the black and maroon U-100 (hull# 9899) with **Greg Hopp** driving and also acting as owners rep. **Tim Shadduck** will be handling operations and will lead as crew chief. Shadduck and the team, along with crew from other teams have been helping get the Leland Unlimited team ready for the 2012 season. FOX Plumbing has signed on as title sponsor for Seafair and supporting the team on what is being called "*Leland's American Dream Tour*" by Leland's family.



**Important**  
**Boat Designs**

## Department of Amplification

In last month's Heritage column, Jay Murphy was included in the list of drivers who were key figures during the 1950s, when hydroplanes represented yacht clubs. However, he was not included in the list of top drivers who are still alive. Murphy, whose family raced the *Breathless* boats, is still living. He and his late brother Roger were the hope of the Tahoe Yacht Club, and as such he should have been included among the top drivers who are still with us. We regret the oversight. ~**Craig Fjarlie**

## **U-1 Spirit of Qatar 96**

### **Shop Shots**

Work began back in March on the former U-96 *Spirit of Qatar* hull after its return from Doha. The Ellstrom team moved and designated a new area within the Ellstrom compound for a new shop to house the boat, trailer, and hauler. This new area allows more room for equipment, projects, and overall team maintenance on the race boat. The first shot, taken 3/25, shows the early progress removing the multiple layers of different paint schemes over the history of the hull. Some old white, orange, and maroon colors can be seen on the partially stripped down hull. Rumor has it that over 75 lbs of old paint was sanded off the hull during the work. Work progressed over the spring with upgrades and rebuilds to areas that needed attention and time hadn't allowed in the past. A few design upgrades were made to the stern area of the boat and duplicate wings, uprights, and other parts have made for depth heading into the 2012 season. The middle photo, taken 5/29, show the hull after work had been completed and it was being sanded and prepped for painting. In the background you will notice a new cowling/air intake and a hint of the return of a little Ellstrom extra. The newly completed color scheme for the U-1 *Spirit of Qatar 96* features a pearlescent white with maroon accents featuring the flag of Qatar on the rear half of the hull and the front canard. Bottom photo shows finished product for 2012. ~ **Lon Erickson**



## U-11 Peters & May Shop Shots

The photo at right was taken at the May 18th test at Tri-Cities. Shannon and Scott Raney near the shore line behind *Peters & May* as it is backed up next to the Columbia River. ~Karl Pearson photo



The bottom two photos shown here are after the May Tri-Cities testing session. The team started going through analyzing test results, checking systems readouts, and finishing some minor upgrades to some components. The hull is now being prepped for a new paint scheme that they wanted to wait to complete after their spring test, the “new” *Peters & May* look has been kept under wraps so far. Engine work continues to complete the final touches on the 2nd motor they plan on taking east for the eastern swing to open the season. The U-11 URG team has spent the winter building up their reserve of parts, gearbox combinations, and retrofitting systems that they found needed attention after their inaugural season. Scott Raney and team have used that first season to learn from running this hull and to take the next step to compete with the front runners.



~ Lon Erickson

## **88 Degree Men Shop Shots**

Top photo at right is what the team started with; the former U-10 *Hoss Mortgage Investors* that was wrecked in Seattle in 2008 and spent the following years sitting in the Hydros Inc. shop. Lon took this shot in 2010.

Fresh off their successful Tri-Cities shakedown run and return to the water for the former U-10 USA Racing hull, Matt Gregory and team started preparations for the 2012 season. The team went through the boat after the testing to assure all systems performed properly and everything was in order after not running for three years. Changes made to the hull this spring to update the ride and performance paid off after getting a chance to run in the Tri-Cities. They feel they have made the steps in the right direction and now are finishing “dyno” work on their motors to set them up for race conditions and different gear ratios for the multiple size courses they will be seeing. The main focus was to make the proper changes in hull and engine setup to reflect the 4.1 fuel flow the teams are now using. Additionally, Scott Liddycoat has been out west and getting his “office” setup to his liking, designing a custom race seat, and getting more comfortable with the cockpit systems and his new race boat.

~ Lon Erickson



# Close Up with Matt Gregory

by **Lon Erickson**

One of the exciting developments for upcoming H1 Unlimited season is the return of the Gregory Family/USA Racing Partners team to the circuit. They have teamed up with Degree Men and Unilever as their title sponsor in 2012. I recently had the opportunity to sit down and talk with Director of Competition and Crew Chief of the 88 Degree Men team, Matt Gregory. Here's our interview with Matt.

**UNJ:** Please give us some background on when and where you were born, early work experience, education.

**Matt:** I was born and raised in Las Vegas, Nevada on Feb. 22, 1979. I attended Lewis and Clark College for two years to play basketball. After a knee injury, and the fact that it took me away from racing, I left Lewis and Clark to try and finish school closer to home. I went to work as a Junior in college for my Father's company Hansen Mechanical as a sheet metal estimator. Unfortunately I never finished school as work and racing were what drove me!

**UNJ:** I think a lot of us know about, at least a part of, how your family is very big factor in your involvement in racing. Can you share more about how all that came about? First race? Best memory? Who taught you about what it takes to run a race boat?

**Matt:** Family was always first with us. Dad purchased his first race boat in the early 90's. We traveled as a family to Phoenix for the IHBA World Finals. He had ulterior motives for attending that race. The K-Boats were scheduled to run an exhibition in between the drag boats. That is where I fell in love! I watched a deck-to-deck heat race with George Stratton and Gordon Jennings that made the hair on your neck stand up! After that race, Dad looked at us and said "This is what we are going to do"! I was 11-12 years old... Absolutely hooked! Later that year, KG Racing was born. K-12 *Wild Fire* with Mike Patterson at the wheel. When we attended our first two races it was just Dad and his boys (Adam and I). At the second race in San Jose, Calif., the boat crashed violently nearly killing Mike. That was a memory I will never forget! Sitting in the emergency room watching Dad talk to doctors about the extent of the injuries. Mike made it through that wreck with a broken neck and multiple other injuries. We came home with what was left of that first K-Boat and listened to Dad tell Mom that we were done! I can remember a video he took of the damage, and at the end signed off with "see you later K-12". Later that year, George Stratton showed up at the house. After many arguments and long discussions, K-12 was re-born. The entire family attended races from that day forward. It was important to Dad, Mom, and very important to George!

**UNJ:** Ever had a chance to drive one of your boats? Any desire to?

**Matt:** I have not. I have begged and pleaded since I was a kid! But being 6'8" has prohibited me from driving much!

**UNJ:** You have that sense about you that you are always having fun, yet can still be focused on what needs to be done, what's the secret?

**Matt:** Well I wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't fun :) That is something Dad preached to ALL of us. The moment it stops being fun is the time to walk away. This is a million dollar business, and it requires 110% of your focus to insure that the crew guys are taken care of, the driver is comfortable, the owner is happy, and you fulfill your duties to your sponsor. You can't lose that focus because without everything in place and operating as smoothly as possible, you will struggle to be a successful organization.



Matt Gregory at Tri-Cities test

Brad Drake photo

**UNJ:** Matt, plain and simple, why did you want to return to competing in the unlimiteds?

**Matt:** Racing has been my passion for as long as I can remember. It gets in your blood and you need it! I eat sleep and drink the sport of Unlimited Hydroplane racing.

**UNJ:** Describe the process for the getting back into the sport, the boat, acquiring the Degree sponsorship, putting together the crew . . .

**Matt:** This process began a year after the passing of my father. The family got together and decided that the boat needed to run again, for Dad. We worked hard to acquire sponsorship dollars for the west coast races in 2010 when we tragically lost Dave Bryant. That one stung! We really had nothing left at that point. So the decision was made to put the equipment up for sale and shop very hard for a buyer. After some time, we realized that just having the equipment wasn't enough. We pursued the idea of selling a complete package: boat, team WITH sponsor! Over the past year, USA Racing has developed lasting relationships with potential sponsors that will be involved at some point in unlimited hydroplane racing. As for the Degree sponsorship . . . Unilever evaluates their sponsorship programs each and every year. They go through a process of determining which group has the assets to fulfill what is required for their program. Through this process, USA Racing Partners was awarded the contract for the 2012 H1 season. We are honored and extremely excited to be working with and representing a great product like Degree for Men and a great company in Unilever!

**UNJ:** Your team is based out of Tukwila, Wash. How does Hydros Inc./Joe Little factor into this whole endeavor?

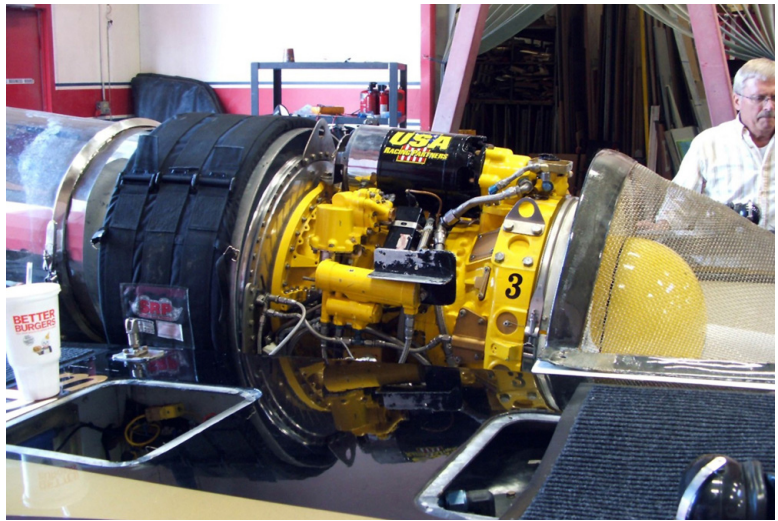
**Matt:** After the death of my father in 2008, we closed down our facility in Las Vegas at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway. It made good business sense to contact Mr. Little and discuss the possibility of leasing the Hydroplanes Inc. shop being that our equipment was there following the '08 Seafair race. It was a win win for both organizations.

**UNJ:** Why Scott Liddycoat as driver, and how did that all come about?

**Matt:** Scott brings years of seat time to the table, which is something you can't teach. He jumped into a difficult boat to drive in the T-6 and was impressive early and often. His demeanor on and off the track is very calm and collective, and really reminded me of another great rookie, Dave Bryant. I met Scott personally for the first time at Detroit last year after his great heat races with Mike Kelly. Scott's desire to compete and win made him the clear fit for USA Racing and Degree for Men!

**UNJ:** Without sharing all your "speed secrets", what was done to the former U-10, T-3 hull to compete with the hulls racing today?

**Matt:** We really had the boat dialed-in during the 2008 season. This hull has great balance and an exceptional ride. The big difference for us this season will be adapting to the change in



One of four Lycoming T55 turbine engines for Degree Men at Hydros Inc.

Lon Erickson photo



Scott Liddycoat and Matt Gregory after a run on the Columbia River in May.

Karl Pearson photo



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the fuel flow from 4.3 to 4.1 gpm. We have spent significant time on the dyno making those adjustments, and all four motors prepared by Mark Smith are strong. We have made some adjustments to the boat, and we were pleased with the performance at the test session.

**UNJ:** Goals for USA Racing Partners in 2012?

**Matt:** Compete early and challenge the top groups for heat and race wins! We would not have made this decision to come back if we did not have every opportunity to win races.

**UNJ:** Will we see Degree/Unilever doing the same things as in their first years in the sport, with respect to showcasing the team and product involvement surrounding the events? Anything new coming?

**Matt:** Absolutely! This whole program is driven around the Degree for Men Adrenaline Series. The display program is already out and about hitting key retail markets. Fans will get a chance to visit the activation area to see both the display boat and the 88 Nationwide car of Jr. Motorsports and receive product samples and prizes!

**UNJ:** The competition, what's your assessment of it?

**Matt:** TOUGH! I feel like the competition within H1 is as strong as ever. There is no room for error!

**UNJ:** How can the fans become more involved and support unlimited hydroplane racing?

**Matt:** I think that social media gives the fans a true voice through Face Book and Twitter. It's great that a fan can send a quick note to their favorite team/driver or voice their opinion on the racing. The most important way to get involved however, is to come out and spend a weekend with us! These race sites we go to do an amazing job at catering to the fans.

**UNJ:** What will it take to generate a broader base of interest and bring more sponsors to grow the sport?

**Matt:** We need more races domestically. And we definitely need an east coast presence. With more race sites comes more opportunity to build marketing programs that attract major sponsors. We have a fairly broad base of fans, we just need to give them what they want...MORE! It is very exciting to see the addition of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and others on the horizon.

**UNJ:** If there was *one* thing you would like to see in the sport, (rules, format, changes, anything . . .) what would it be?

**Matt:** I have to defer to above. I would really like to see us expand domestically. I would love to see more crossover with the NASCAR teams and other racing organizations.

**UNJ:** Here's an opportunity to share anything you wish with a large spectrum of fans, the people who follow the sport, and more . . . Anything else you want to add?

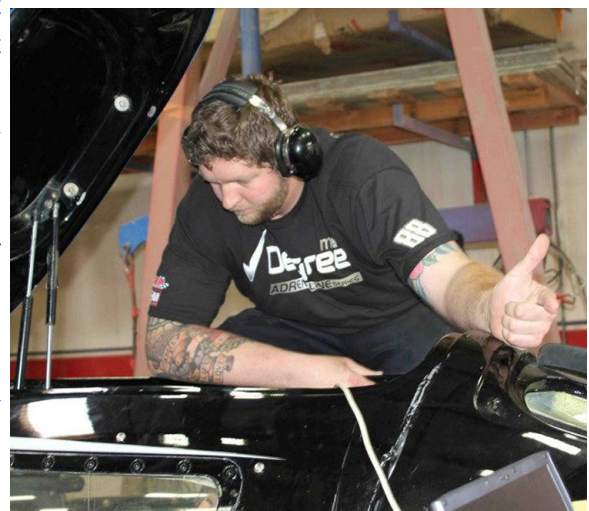
**Matt:** First and foremost, on behalf of the entire Gregory family and everyone at USA Racing Partners, thank you for all the love and support over the past 4 years. We all went through some difficult times and we received so many heartfelt messages.

We would like to thank Ernie Hoover and Degree for Men for this opportunity to represent you and this great brand. We look forward to putting the famed 88 up front for you!

I would also like to thank the *Unlimited NewsJournal* for all that you do for the sport. You provide great insight for the fans and teams. We all appreciate you!

Lastly, I need to thank my amazing girlfriend, Ilona Nowak, for pushing me, believing in me and allowing me to follow my dreams!

**Back to work!!**



Face Book photo

# The U-17 Red Dot test June 23rd

From Brad Drake

The Our Gang Racing team rolled into the Neil Lampson pits on Saturday morning under sunny skies but that wasn't going to last long. After a brief set-up, Kip Brown took the U-17 *Miss Red Dot* out onto the Columbia River for its first time on the water this season. He turned three laps on the makeshift course with the boat appearing to run well and then brought the boat back in. The brain trust of the Our Gang team huddled and then decided to make some adjustments to the wing. He headed back out onto the course under dark and threatening clouds that were approaching fast, along with some drizzle coming down. The crowd on hand huddled under umbrellas as Kip took one fast lap and headed up the backstretch before returning to the pits. Upon returning, Kip announced that they were done for the day and the team started breaking down their pit area and buttoning up the boat. The looming weather didn't offer up much for photo opportunities when they were running but later in the day the weather turned bright and sunny again after the testing was done.

The crowd that came down to watch, along with the Water Follies team were hoping for a little more time on the water to see the U-17 run, but the team felt they got all the necessary data back and the changes they made during the off-season appeared to perform as expected. It was a rather short testing session compared to others that have tested in recent years. The team later reported they were all set for the season opener and headed home to the shop back over the mountains in Preston, Wash. A little last minute prep work at the shop until it's time to head east to Madison. ~ Brad Drake photos





The 2012 Unlimited Hydroplane race schedule is pretty much set. The Air National Guard is back and is the 2012 series sponsor.

The series kicks off July 6-8, with the race in Madison, Indiana. Lucas Oil recently signed on as the title sponsor for the Madison event. That was good news as, according to the *Madison Courier*, the insurance for the site increased about \$15,000 this year and other costs increased, too, which has made it more difficult for the race to financially break even. There is more fallout from last year's accident, as the new insurance carrier requires that H1, not the Madison race site, have full control of the hot-pits area. Also, the *Madison Courier* confirmed earlier rumors, that two of the three injured divers last year had not signed insurance waivers; signing insurance waivers will be required for all regatta workers. Veteran race reporter, Craig Fjarlie,

will cover the race for the *Unlimited NewsJournal*.

The Gold Cup race will be in Detroit, July 13-15. The Detroit Yacht Club returns as a supporting sponsor. Without a title sponsor, the race organizers held a fundraiser and about 500 people attended, raising about \$90,000, ensuring the financial viability for the race. Our race reporter, Mac Clouse, gets all the news and quotes about the race for his race report for *UNJ*.

The series moves west to Tri-Cities (Kennewick, Pasco, Richland), Wash. for the 47<sup>th</sup> running of the Columbia Cup, July 27-29. Longtime event sponsor, Lamb Weston, returns as the title sponsor. (Let's all hope Lamb Weston continues the popular Free-Frys Friday, where many restaurants offer free servings of Lamb Weston brand French fries on Friday of boat-race weekend!) The Dash for Cash will be back on Friday afternoon. Legends Casino is sponsoring the vintage unlimited boats that will run exhibitions throughout the weekend. The HAPO Community Credit Union will sponsor the air show and the Plumbers and Steamfitters UA Local 598 has stepped up to sponsor the Grand Prix hydro race. An interesting side note—Tri-Cities would like to host the Gold Cup when they celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> running of the race. Choir Director by day, and longtime hydro fan and writer on the weekend, Ben Keller, will cover the event for *UNJ*.

Albert Lee Appliances returns for the third year in a row as the title sponsor for the Seattle race, August 3-5. The vintage boats will be back making exhibition runs. Boeing will sponsor the popular Blue Angels performance. New this year will be a Formula One (F-1 Prop) outboard race that features tight corners and a racecourse close to shore; Graham Trucking will sponsor the F-1 Prop event. KIRO TV will provide all-day coverage on Sunday. Well-known hydro photographer and writer, Bill Osborne, will cover the Albert Lee Cup for *UNJ*.

Recently it was announced that several Unlimited boats would participate in an exhibition race in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho over Labor Day Weekend in conjunction with a Grand Prix race. The racecourse will be just outside the city limits; fans will park at the county fairgrounds and take a bus shuttle to the viewing area. Event organizers plan a sanctioned race in 2013. The last Unlimited race held at this lake was in 1968 and Billy Schumacher won it. Schumacher told the press that he plans to drive his boat at the 2012 exhibition.

Although there was considerable concern about the viability of racing in San Diego this season, H1 confirms that there will be a race in San Diego, September 14-16. The Air National Guard is listed as the title sponsor on the H1 website. Mac Clouse will again cover the race for *UNJ*.

Any other domestic races this season? Sam Cole told the Spokane, Wash. *Spokesman-Review* newspaper in early June, "Unlimited hydroplanes have roots in the Northwest, Cole said. He plans to announce the location of another big race in the U.S. within the next three weeks."

On the international side, the UIM World Championship Oryx Cup returns Nov. 8-10 in Doha, Qatar; the Oryx Cup has become a favorite race with race teams. In addition, Sam Cole is renewing efforts to schedule 1-3 races in China. Should the Unlimiteds head to China, some speculate the Oryx Cup race date might change. Stay tuned.

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Letters may be edited for clarity and space.

### Next Meeting of Unlimiteds Unanimous

**KINGSGATE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**12315 NE 143rd St.**

**Kirkland, Washington**

-everyone welcome!

**Sunday July 8th**

**UNJ 2 pm -- 4:30pm**

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