



OCTOBER 2025

## Tate, Goodman Real Estate win second-straight title.



Robert Peters

**A**ndrew Tate and the U-91 *Miss Goodman Real Estate* accumulated enough points during the San Diego Bayfair race to claim a second-straight national championship. Meanwhile, the race itself was won by J. Michael Kelly in *Beacon Electric*. Tate took second-place honors while Jamie Nilsen drove *Miss FLAV-R-PAC* to a third-place finish on Mission Bay.

We will include a full race report, plus notes and quotes from the pits, in next month's issue of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*.

### National Points Standings

#### FINAL 2025 STANDINGS:

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. U-91 <i>Miss Goodman Real Estate</i> (Andrew Tate) | 5,975 |
| 2. U-8 <i>Beacon Electric</i> (J. Michael Kelly)      | 5,211 |
| 3. U-27 <i>Miss Apollo</i> (Dave Villwock)            | 4,597 |
| 4. U-11 <i>Miss FLAV-R-PAC</i> (Jamie Nilsen)         | 4,527 |
| 5. U-9 <i>Beacon Plumbing</i> (Corey Peabody)         | 3,709 |
| 6. U-21 <i>Spirit of America</i> (Gunnar O'Farrell)   | 1,738 |
| 7. U-12 <i>Graham Trucking</i> (Jeff Bernard)         | 1,590 |
| 8. U-6 <i>Miss Madison</i> (Brandon Kennedy)          | 225   |

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# WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

In 2000, six Unlimiteds aimed for Chelan mile trials



Jon Osterberg

Chelan's mile and kilo traps would have run between Lakeside Park, right foreground, and Pat & Mike's, a store near the shoreline to the north.

BY JON OSTERBERG

**T**wenty-five years ago in November 2000, six hydro teams had planned to compete in “Speed Week Lake Chelan,” a post-season assault on the mile world straightaway record that recently had been broken by Russ Wicks, who averaged 205.494 mph aboard *Miss Freei*.

Wicks's June 15 Lake Washington mark had broken Roy Duby's 38-year-old record of 200.419 mph, set April 1962 in *Miss U.S.1* on a misty Lake Gunterville.

*Miss Freei* won no heats during the 2000 season and finished ninth in high points. Wicks did not race the boat; owner Ken Muscatel did. A former motocross rider, Wicks had never even sat in an Unlimited hydro until two weeks earlier. He told motorsports scribe Da-

vid Tremayne, “I can't speak for David Villwock and the *Budweiser* team, but I'm aware that he said something to the news media about our speed not being that tremendously fast when we broke the record. And that maybe they would come out and break it.”

Villwock aside, the rest of the hydro community publicly applauded Wicks, crew chief Roger Newton, and owner Ken Muscatel for raising the longstanding record.

Then the private buzz started within other teams. “If *Freei* can do it, we can really smash that record.”

At the 2000 Columbia Cup, the buzz was confirmed.

Chelan businessman John Walcker announced that Chelan would stage

mile- and kilo-straightaway record runs in November that would be sanctioned by the APBA, the Union of International Motorboating, and the Seattle Inboard Racing Association. Walcker led the effort and hoped to land sponsorship from the Washington Apple Commission. All classes of inboard boats would be invited, including Unlimiteds.

Skeptics noted Chelan's notorious winds that often churn whitecaps on the 55-mile long glacier-carved lake. But Mark Evans, who drove *Miss E-Lam Plus* to victory that weekend in Tri-Cities, said November usually brings calm Lake Chelan waters.

The course would stretch between Chelan's Lakeside Park and Pat & Mike's Store, tucked as close as possible to the



southwest shore. The mile and kilo traps would be sandwiched by mile-long acceleration and deceleration chutes.

“Sven [Ellstrom] wants to try it, but to be honest, I’m not super excited,” Evans said. “My boat’s set up for closed-course racing, not straightaway runs. I’m willing to take it up to 220, but no more. You break a prop or blow a gearbox or something at that speed, and you’re in deep trouble.”

“We have six Unlimited boats committed for Speed Week,” Walcker said a few weeks later. “Ken Muscatel’s *Freei* team, *Budweiser*, *York*, *Appian Jeronimo*, *E-Lam Plus*, and the Cooper’s boat.”

“Speed Week will be a big media event, no question,” added Jim Codling, APBA Region 10 chairman. “Records definitely will be set.”

Mitch Evans, driver of U-3 (at that time, the “Tubby” hull) and owner Ed Cooper said they’d participate but needed sponsor support. Mitch said Villwock had asked if the Cooper team might run if it had *Budweiser* sponsorship.

“Budweiser would like to own all three mile-straightaway records,” Mitch said. “For unrestricted turbines, for fu-



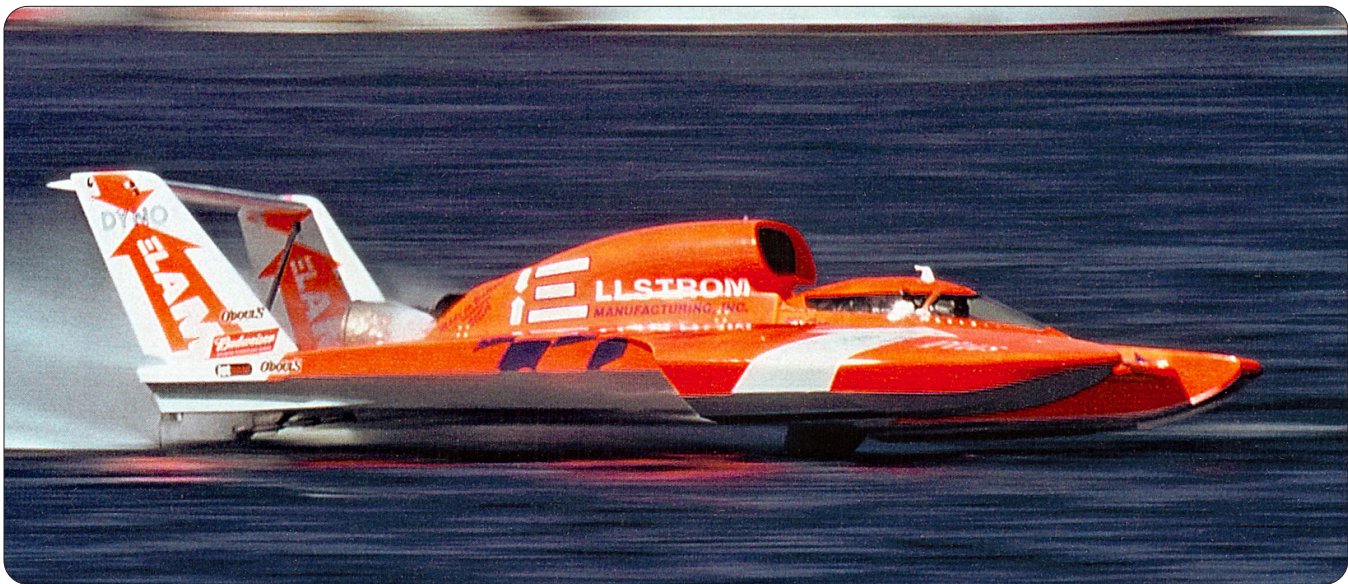
Jon Osterberg



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

**TOP:** Miss Freei crew chief Roger Newton gets doused with bubbly after Russ Wicks upped the mile record to 205.494 mph on June 15, 2000 in Seattle. **ABOVE:** The world record holder, Miss Freei.





Mark Evans flies *Miss E-Lam Plus* at Seafair 2000. The Ellstrom family committed to run its speedster at Speed Week Lake Chelan, which never materialized.



*Miss Freei* owner-driver Ken Muscatel (left) and Mark Evans at Seafair in 1994.

el-restricted turbines, and for piston boats. No doubt, I'd do it."

Mitch and Cooper figured their best shot might be using their 1988 "Mitch boat" that last raced in 1996.

"It's faster in the chutes than our current hull," said Mitch. "It's lighter and narrower. But it needs a new transom, decks, cockpit bars, a complete overhaul, really."

Then tragedy struck and plans froze.

George Stratton flipped *Appian Jeronimo* while testing at the September San Diego race and died when his canopy failed. He was the first Unlimited driver to perish since Dean Chenoweth in 1982.

"We've decided to cancel Speed Week pending a safety review of everyone's canopies," Walcker said after the race. "Obviously, safety is our biggest priority."

In October Walcker, Codling, and the Evans brothers announced they were rescheduling Speed Week for 2001, later settling on an October 24 date.

"Interest is high for next year," said Walcker. "We're talking with two local sponsors and a national sponsor, and we expect to get national TV coverage."

But over the winter, plans fizzled. Chelan would not become the wa-



Jon Oserberg



Jon Oserberg



**TOP:** The Cooper team hoped to run its lighter, faster 1988 hull rather than “Tubby,” the team’s current hull in 2000-2001. **ABOVE:** The Coopers’s 1997-2001 hull, nicknamed “Tubby,” weighed more than 8,900 lbs., far more than expected, and too much for a mile-record speed run.

ter-speed capital of the world.

In March 2025, Mitch Evans reflected on what had scuttled Speed Week a quarter-century earlier.

“The mile trials fell apart from a combination of costs, permitting, and lack of sponsorship,” Evans said. “The permitting alone was an obstacle because it involved both the city and Chelan County, and it required closing down

part of the lake. In the end, Speed Week was going to cost as much as staging an H1 hydro race.”

Walcker had projected in 2000 that the event would cost more than \$50,000, counting fees for insurance, officials, cranes, surveys, rescue sleds, medics, and a helicopter. That proved to be an underestimate. ❖

### Post-mortem:

On March 13, 2004, Dave Villwock throttled *Miss Budweiser* to 220.493 mph to break the kilo-straightaway record on Thermalito Afterbay near Oroville, California. *Bud* T-5 broke its rudder and propeller at the end of the run, but Villwock maintained control. His *Bud* record still stands.



# Villwock talks Apollo boats

Before winning the Gold Cup at the Tri-Cities in late July, Dave Villwock took a few minutes earlier that weekend to talk with Craig Fjarlie about the different boats the Apollo team has used this year. The team's newer boat [Hull #2427] flipped and was damaged at Guntersville, so they dipped into their reserve fleet and used the former Oh Boy! Oberto/Miss HomeStreet that was built in 2007 [Hull #0706]. The boat had last raced in 2023 with Andrew Tate driving.

**UNJ: How does the boat you're driving today compare to the other Apollo boat?**

Villwock: Well, this boat is pretty much off of the old 1996 drawing, you know, the T-5, T-6, so...

**Stuff you're more familiar with?**

Yeah, it's sort of, you know, kinda the same vintage stuff. It's got a few things that are a little different, but not much, so it behaves the same. Mike [Hanson] has kind of left us the canard system that is a little different than the other things we've done like on the *Budweiser* boats, and *Elam* boats, Kelly's boat, and, you know, the rest. It pretty much follows what we did at *Budweiser*, makes a little different, so it feels a little different and, so, trying to get used to that a little bit.

**It's heavier than the other Apollo boat?**

I don't know, it's about the same. I mean, it's pretty close, we're within, like, 50 pounds of legal weight. We put it on a diet this week. Got it down to close enough. We changed a bunch of stuff, built a couple of lighter parts, stuff like that, so I think it's about 50 pounds over legal right now.

**Over the legal minimum?**

Yeah, so it's pretty close. The other one has to weigh that. You know, it's right on the weight limits here.

**Do you think you'll run this one or the first boat at Seattle?**

I don't know, we'll see. First, we'll try to get through this, then go on to Seattle. The other boat's about fixed, just have to put a deck on it, glass it off. You know, the rest of the work is done. That'll be good. Running this boat was kind of an exercise about making the overall organization better. We could've fixed the other boat and brought it to Madison, but we thought, well, if we take this boat that has the seat and the pedals and everything that was set up for Andrew... So, we started to look at it. Went, wait a minute.

As the organization, if I just take what they had for An-



Dave Villwock in San Diego

Robert Peters





Chris Denslow

drew out and put it in a box and don't move any of the cables or anything and then just build something that fits me, that way when either one of us needs it, it's an hour change. That makes more sense. You don't have to work an extra four or five hours to make that happen, you know? But in the end, we got a better deal, plus we didn't have the skid fin bracket on it, we didn't have the rudder bracket on it.

You know, it hadn't been run and inspected. We got all the stuff inspected but we hadn't run it through inspection yet, stuff like that, so we thought as an organization we're probably better to put it together, take it to Madison—we know what we're getting there and we didn't know what that course was going to throw at us. So, we thought that might be a better choice.

And, you know, did we take time away from fixing the other one? Yeah. You know, you take it along in steps, but at the same time we're working on both of 'em, so at the end of the year we're up to full strength. We thought that was worthwhile, so that's kind of what we did.

Then we're thinking about here [Tri-Cities], we could've fixed it here, but we're getting into a Detroit thing where this is always rough down here and it's going to be tight up there. So maybe, and then if you look at the weight, and usually when somebody said, "Well, that boat is a little overweight," usually that means like 500 or 600 pounds. You know what I mean? But this was like

100, 150 pounds overweight.

So, we went, okay, we can build a wing and you know, get some lighter stuff and put it in and we can buy and put in there and get it pretty close. So, we have, that's what we did. Then we can run the motors through it. That's what we're doing right now is changing to another motor we haven't run, and that was a new fuel control, that's what we were kind of sneaking up on it, and still not quite there but it's pretty close.

Cause and effect, making little adjustments, go run it. You know, we don't get to run all day like we used to where you could run it four or five times. You get to run it twice in our test session. So, we did that.

**Okay, well, thank you. ❖**

Dave Villwock pilots *Miss Apollo* to victory during this summer's Gold Cup on the Columbia River at the Tri-Cities. The team started the season with a hull that was completed last year, but that was heavily damaged at Gunter'sville. This hull was built in 2007 and has been one of the most successful in the sport's history, having captured a total of 26 race victories and eight national titles under names such as *Oh Boy!*, *Oberto* and *Miss HomeStreet*.



# Sport mourns the passing of photographer Chris Denslow

Like everybody else in the world of Unlimited hydroplane racing, we were stunned and greatly saddened by the news in late August that Chris Denslow had passed away after a brief illness. Chris was a very talented photographer and an important member of the Unlimited NewsJournal team. He was always there to capture the hydro action, and his photos—always sharp and perfectly focused—have graced the pages of this publication extensively for many years. We are thankful that Chris was gracious enough to let us use his work as much as we wished. And, given the quality of his photos, we always felt privileged to do so. He and his dry sense of humor will be greatly missed within the hydro racing community, but at least there is some comfort in knowing that the legacy of excellent photography that he leaves behind will continue to live on and entertain boat racing fans for decades to come. As a way to remember Chris, we thought the most appropriate tributes (in words and photos) should come from two of the other photographers who often stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Denslow on the shoreline.

BY JAMES CRISP

I first met Chris Denslow in either Evansville or Detroit around 2007. I believe at that time I was photographing hydroplanes for the *Unlimited NewsJournal* and possibly *Unlimited's* Detroit. They were my favorite thing to shoot (and still are).

I remember early on being aware of Chris at various race sites when he started popping up. We often shot from the same general areas and eventually I approached him. Chris was not very talkative in the beginning. I wasn't sure why at first—photographers can be a strange bunch. Maybe there was a sense of competition—there often is.

After the first few years went by (we'd generally see each other at Evansville, Madison, and Detroit) our conver-

sations slowly increased. It was after a few of these conversations that we started to know each other a bit better. That's when I realized we shared a similar twist-ed sense of humor.

Chris loved boat racing, and a big part of it was the people. Not only did he travel the entire H1 circuit, he did many classes of boats all over Washington. From Pateros to Soap Lake and most points in between he was probably on the road half the weekends of the year. If that wasn't enough, he also went to many R/C events during the summer.

Over time our friendship grew and we'd often meet up for dinner after the races. We quickly learned that we both liked to collect hydro memorabilia. In time, Chris would often pick up extras

on the West Coast and either ship them to me or give 'em to me next time he saw me. It was nice having someone like that looking out for me. If I happened on something he needed I'd look out for him, but it was usually him coming up with the most desired items.

Fairly early on I asked Chris why he started coming to the East Coast races. He said he'd seen some of my *Elam* flip photos from Detroit and he didn't feel it was right that "Bill O and I got all the good pictures". Chris wasn't super free with compliments, but I took that as one.

In the early 2000's I'd attach a point-and-shoot camera to my primary camera and shoot stills and video simultaneously. It wasn't long before Mr. Denslow started doing the same—only with better



equipment. I called him on it once and he admitted that “maybe” he got the idea from me, but he actually perfected it! Again, I took it as a compliment.

As it turns out we both had the Winged Wonder as our favorite hull growing up. We’d share stories of seeing it race when we were young, me in Indiana and Kentucky and him in Washington.

Over time we began to communicate between races via text and phone calls. We mostly talked about racing but often the conversation crossed into our families and other aspects of life.

Chris’ travel nightmares were a thing of legend, and I loved to give him grief about them. In fact, many in racing who encountered issues flying would refer to mishaps as being “Denslowed.”

Maybe second to racing, Chris had a huge love of football. I once had to unfriend him on Facebook because I grew tired of my entire feed being him ranting about blown calls and botched plays by the Seahawks.

Chris and I shared an interest in gadgets and video games. Over time we’d start playing *Call of Duty* one-on-one online year-round. Neither of us were great but we were both pretty competitive and didn’t like to lose. It was funny how we’d set up a time to play (usually pretty late at night for me because of the three-hour time difference) and Chris would actually practice in the afternoon before we played. Of course, during the game we’d talk about any and all subjects.

It was during the phone conversations that I learned of Chris’ love of his tropical bird. We’d be in the middle of a heated *CoD* battle and Chris would have to pause the action to attend to “Bird.” (It has a name, which I don’t remember as it was always referred to as Bird. Not the bird, but Bird.) It was one high-maintenance critter, and I often let Chris know that I thought it was Bird that wore the pants in that house. It was funny, but Chris didn’t deny it.

As it turned out that Bird had origi-



Chris Denslow with his camera, capturing the action on the water.

Photos by Craig Barney



nally belonged to Chris' mother. I dreaded the day that Bird died; I didn't dream we'd lose Chris first.

The competition ran throughout our friendship, but it was always respectful and included semi-public spats. I'd always give him grief about the size of his photo galleries, and he'd often respond with "Bite me, Crisp!"

I believe it was 2019 in Detroit I worked out a deal with Jeff Campbell to get my logo on the U-9 hull. It wasn't long after the appearance of my logo there, I was approached by Jimmy Shane (driver of the *HomeStreet* at the time) and told "it's OK, we're gonna put Denslow's logo on our boat!"

That year Andrew Tate won the Gold Cup and my name was on the boat. You can bet I didn't let Chris ever live that down. Soon afterward, "Bite me Crisp" along with the Digital Roostertails moniker began appearing on boats of different classes. It would seem a rivalry had been born, right up there with Ali vs. Frazier, Celtics and Lakers, *Bud* and *Pak*, and even the Yankees and Red Sox.

The last race we attended together, Madison, had Unlimiteds as well the 2.5 stock class. Madisonian (and long-time hydro crew member Matt "Sittin" Sontag) even drove his #22 in the race)

As Sontag's 22 entered the pits I looked up surprised to see "Bite me Crisp/ Digital Roostertails" plastered on the side. My response? I got Dave Villwock to do a video enthusiastically shouting "Bite me, Denslow." I will admit defeat in that battle—Chris was so proud he pulled that one off.

I had no idea it'd be the last race we'd attend together.

At this season's last contest Chris Denslow's name will be on every boat. I was hoping it'd be a get well soon message, but I hate to say that will not be the case. I miss Chris already and I'm sure the same can be said by the entire racing family. Simply put, racing won't be the same for me. ❖



**TOP:** Chris clowning around with fellow photographer James Crisp, the author of this tribute. **MIDDLE:** Relaxing with photographer Craig Barney, who provided the photos for this tribute. **ABOVE:** Chris helping helping to attach his Digital Roostertails logo to the tail fin of a hydro.

Photos by Craig Barney



# Remembering driver Ron Snyder

BY ANDY MUNTZ

Former Unlimited driver Ron Snyder passed away on September 14 after complications resulting from a stroke. He was 86 years old.

Snyder's boat racing career started in 1962 and, after racing inboards during the late 1960s and early '70s, most notably aboard 280-class hydros named *Suzy's Kitchen* and *Ride On*, he became qualified as an Unlimited driver in 1974 with Gene Benning's *Just-A-Pest III*.

Two years later, he began his long association with the Miss Madison Racing Team. "It was the people of Madison

Columbia Cup.

Known as a no-nonsense guy who had a ready smile, Snyder returned to Gene Benning's boat in 1977, driving it as it was named *Just-A-Pest*, *Miss North Tool*, *Natural Light*, *Miss Lynwood Equipment*, and *The Old Ox*. He

scored points at every event that season with his best performances resulting in third-place finishes at Washington, DC, Madison, and Dayton, Ohio.

His career then reached its high point in 1978 when he was hired by Bernie Little to handle the controls of *Miss*



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Ron Snyder's first Unlimited ride came aboard Gene Benning's *Just-A-Pest III* in 1974



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Ron Snyder

who gave me the chance to prove what I could really do with an Unlimited," he later remembered. In just his second appearance with the team, he drove the *Miss Madison* to a third-place finish at the 1976 President's Cup and later that season, with the boat carrying the name of *Miss Lynwood* in the Pacific Northwest, he placed third again at the

## Ron Snyder's Driving Stats

| YEAR    | BOAT                      | HULL# | RACE RESULTS |     |     |     |     | HEAT RESULTS |     |        |    |       | 1st | Pct.  | Top 3 | Pct. |
|---------|---------------------------|-------|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------|-----|--------|----|-------|-----|-------|-------|------|
|         |                           |       | RACES        | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | DNQ | START        | DNS | FINISH |    |       |     |       |       |      |
| 1974    | Just-A-Pest III           | 7175  | 2            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 2            | 1   | 1      | 0  | 0.000 | 1   | 1.000 |       |      |
| 1976    | Miss Madison              | 7206  | 6            | 0   | 0   | 2   | 0   | 16           | 1   | 14     | 2  | 0.143 | 9   | 0.643 |       |      |
|         | Miss Lynwood              | 7206  | 2            | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0   | 4            | 1   | 4      | 0  | 0.000 | 2   | 0.500 |       |      |
| 1977    | Just-A-Pest               | 7571  | 2            | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0   | 5            | 0   | 4      | 0  | 0.000 | 4   | 1.000 |       |      |
|         | Miss North Tool           | 7571  | 1            | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0   | 3            | 0   | 3      | 0  | 0.000 | 3   | 1.000 |       |      |
|         | Natural Light             | 7571  | 2            | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0   | 4            | 1   | 4      | 2  | 0.500 | 4   | 1.000 |       |      |
|         | Miss Lynwood Equipment    | 7571  | 2            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 6            | 0   | 3      | 0  | 0.000 | 3   | 1.000 |       |      |
|         | The Old Ox                | 7571  | 1            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 3            | 0   | 1      | 1  | 1.000 | 1   | 1.000 |       |      |
| 1978    | Miss Budweiser            | 7612  | 7            | 1   | 1   | 1   | 0   | 18           | 3   | 16     | 7  | 0.438 | 15  | 0.938 |       |      |
| 1979    | Detroit Radiographics     | 7177  | 1            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0            | 0   | 0      | 0  | 0.000 | 0   | 0.000 |       |      |
| 1980    | Miss Budweiser            | 7207  | 1            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0            | 0   | 0      | 0  | 0.000 | 0   | 0.000 |       |      |
| 1981    | Miss Kentuckiana Paving   | 6615  | 3            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 6            | 1   | 5      | 0  | 0.000 | 3   | 0.600 |       |      |
|         | Captan Resorts            | 7207  | 1            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 3            | 0   | 3      | 0  | 0.000 | 1   | 0.333 |       |      |
| 1982    | Rich Plan Food Service    | 7325  | 3            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 8            | 0   | 7      | 2  | 0.286 | 4   | 0.571 |       |      |
|         | Miss Madison              | 7325  | 1            | 0   | 1   | 0   | 0   | 2            | 1   | 2      | 0  | 0.000 | 2   | 1.000 |       |      |
|         | Frank Kenny Toyota/Volvo  | 7325  | 3            | 0   | 0   | 2   | 0   | 8            | 1   | 7      | 1  | 0.143 | 6   | 0.857 |       |      |
|         | Miss Canada               | 7422  | 1            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0            | 0   | 0      | 0  | 0.000 | 0   | 0.000 |       |      |
| 1983    | Miss Rich Plan            | 7325  | 6            | 1   | 1   | 0   | 1   | 15           | 0   | 13     | 2  | 0.154 | 9   | 0.692 |       |      |
|         | Frank Kenny Toyota/Volvo  | 7325  | 3            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 6            | 2   | 3      | 2  | 0.667 | 3   | 1.000 |       |      |
| 1984    | American Speedy Printing  | 7325  | 9            | 0   | 2   | 1   | 0   | 22           | 4   | 15     | 1  | 0.067 | 12  | 0.800 |       |      |
| 1985    | Tri-Cities Savings & Loan | 7902  | 1            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0            | 0   | 0      | 0  | 0.000 | 0   | 0.000 |       |      |
|         | Miss Crown Nissan         | 7902  | 1            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0            | 0   | 0      | 0  | 0.000 | 0   | 0.000 |       |      |
|         | U-33                      | 7902  | 1            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0            | 0   | 0      | 0  | 0.000 | 0   | 0.000 |       |      |
|         | Handyman Home Centers     | 7902  | 1            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0            | 0   | 0      | 0  | 0.000 | 0   | 0.000 |       |      |
| 1986    | Miss Madison              | 7325  | 1            | 0   | 1   | 0   | 0   | 3            | 0   | 3      | 1  | 0.333 | 3   | 1.000 |       |      |
|         | Holset Miss Madison       | 7325  | 8            | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0   | 22           | 1   | 17     | 4  | 0.235 | 13  | 0.765 |       |      |
| 1987    | Holset Miss Madison       | 7325  | 8            | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0   | 23           | 1   | 20     | 4  | 0.200 | 15  | 0.750 |       |      |
| 1988    | Holset Miss Madison       | 7325  | 5            | 0   | 1   | 0   | 0   | 13           | 1   | 14     | 0  | 0.000 | 7   | 0.500 |       |      |
|         | Holset Miss Madison       | 8806  | 2            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 4            | 1   | 1      | 0  | 0.000 | 2   | 2.000 |       |      |
| 1989    | Boss Marine Sports        | 8809  | 1            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 1            | 1   | 1      | 0  | 0.000 | 1   | 1.000 |       |      |
|         | Sundek                    | 8809  | 4            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 6            | 4   | 2      | 0  | 0.000 | 1   | 0.500 |       |      |
|         | Miss Tri-Cities           | 8988  | 1            | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 3            | 0   | 2      | 0  | 0.000 | 2   | 1.000 |       |      |
| TOTALS: |                           |       | 91           | 2   | 7   | 12  | 7   | 206          | 25  | 165    | 29 | 0.176 | 126 | 0.764 |       |      |



*Budweiser*. During that campaign he won the Columbia Cup, placed second in Seattle, and thrilled Madison race fans by beating the defending national champion Bill Muncey and his Blue Blaster *Atlas Van Lines* after an exciting four-lap, side-by-side duel. Snyder finished the season second behind Muncey in the national standings.

After driving *Miss Kentuckiana* Paving for Bill Cantrell in 1981, Snyder returned to the Madison team in 1982, where he drove the former Winged Wonder *Pay 'n Pak* hull. At Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri, at the start of the 1983 season, he stunned Chip Hanauer in *Atlas Van Lines* and Jim Kropfeld in *Miss Budweiser* by driving *Miss Rich Plan* to a perfect start in the final heat and came away with the Madison team's first race victory in a dozen years.

"I had won the Tri-Cities race with the *Budweiser* in '78," he later pointed out, "but that Lake of the Ozarks race—that was extra special."

Except for stints with other race teams in 1985 and 1989, he spent the remainder of his career with Madison, but the results weren't always as triumphant. Among several incidents, his best remembered came in 1988 while driving *Holset Miss Madison* at San Diego. Speeding down the backstretch side by side with Jon Prevost in *Miss Circus Circus*, the two boats suddenly hit the same gust of wind and blew over backwards like they were synchronized high divers at the Olympics—Prevost's boat landing right-side up while Snyder's ended upside down. "If not for that canopy, I would have been shaking hands with the angels," he said later.

He retired from driving after the 1989 season but over the years remained a frequent visitor to the pits at Madison, where he enjoyed visiting with his many boat racing friends.

A celebration in his memory will be held at 5 p.m. on Friday, October 3 at the New Bremen American Legion Post 241 in New Bremen, Ohio. ❖



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



Robert Peters



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

**TOP:** Snyder celebrates after winning his first race, which came aboard *Miss Budweiser* at the 1978 Columbia Cup in the Tri-Cities. **MIDDLE:** His only other victory came at the 1983 Missouri Governor's Cup at Lake of the Ozarks. He drove *Miss Rich Plan* in that race, which is shown here at Detroit a month later, where Snyder would finish second. **ABOVE:** One of Snyder's last Unlimited rides came in the cockpit of *Sundek* in 1989.



# AROUND THE CIRCUIT

## Race Team and Race Site News by Chris Tracy



Seafair hosted a lunch for the Seafair volunteers at the Elks Club on Shilshole Bay in Seattle on September 6. Seafair is more than just the hydro races. The lunch included torchlight parade volunteers, fireworks volunteers, fleet week volunteers, triathlon volunteers, air show volunteers, Seafair pirates, Seafair clowns, and more, including hydro race volunteers.



Chris Tracy

Various awards were handed out, but one recognition seemed special. Everyone was asked to stand and then sit down if one had volunteered 10 years or less, then less than 20 years, 30 years, 40 years and finally less than 50 years! Surprisingly, there were nearly a dozen volunteers that had volunteered for Seafair for more than 50 years, and among them was the *Unlimited NewsJournal's* Allen Stiles, who has volunteered with hydro pit tours for those many years.

Speaking of awards, save November 15 as it is the tentative date for the 2025 H1 Awards Banquet that likely will be held in the Tri-Cities, Wash.

As to boat news, here's what the drums are beating:

- ◆ Likely it will take about two months to repair the U-8 *Beacon Plumbing* boat, which was damaged in Heat 1 in San Diego.

- ◆ I've been told that Charlie Grooms is working on a plan for BWR Racing for next year.

- ◆ The Madison team will continue to lease Dave Bartush's T-3 boat next year for the eastern race(s). And, it has been reported that a new cowling has been fabricated for Bartush's T-5, but no other information has been announced.

- ◆ As an aside, former Unlimited hydroplane and Unlimited race sponsor HomeStreet Bank has merged with larger Mechanics Bank; all HomeStreet branches now carry the Mechanics Bank name.

As mentioned elsewhere in this issue of the *NewsJournal*, H1 photographer Chris Denslow suddenly passed away in late

August. All of the hydros at San Diego had a decal on them (below) that honored Chris Denslow and his photography.



Denslow and I sat at the same table at last year's H1 Award's Banquet. In May, I got to ride in the 1958 *Miss Bardahl* in Seattle, and Denslow quietly chronicled my ride and sent me a portfolio of photos that told the story of my ride. I didn't ask him to do it; he did it out of kindness and thoughtfulness for a hydro buddy.

Chris Denslow never attended a *NewsJournal* meeting, but his work has been important to our publication. He freely shared his hydro photos with us, that we have used for years to help illustrate our stories. We'll all miss him and our hearts ache for him and his family. ❖



# MY \$0.02 WORTH

## Editorial Comment by Andy Muntz



**T**he season's final race in San Diego featured some exciting deck-to-deck racing action between J. Michael Kelly and Andrew Tate in the final heat. The press release issued by H1 Unlimited afterward declared that the race "delivered everything fans love about hydroplane racing: speed, competition, and a spectacular show."

But, did the San Diego show actually deliver what fans want from the sport?

Just two years ago, Bob Davies, the race director for San Diego Bayfair event, announced that they would cancel their 2023 race. Part of the reason, he explained in an article published in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, was the lack of entries in the San Diego hydro race. He told the reporter that he was disappointed that only six boats had appeared at their races in recent years.

I'm curious, what changed? The field for this year's San Diego race was just five boats, and one of those was eliminated in the first heat, leaving a field of only four hydroplanes to fill-out the remaining two days of action. Yes, the event ended with

a close battle in the final, but is that really what race fans want to see, especially when many of them remember that not long ago a dozen or more hydros would show up for a race?

According to the results of a survey that H1 Unlimited conducted a few years ago, the fans said that without question they liked seeing more boats on the water. Nearly 1,000 people participated in the survey and, of those, about half said the thing that they liked best about Unlimited hydroplane racing was that the sport was spectacular to watch.

The survey also asked what fans would like to see when they considered the sport's future. The plurality said they'd like to see more competitors.

So, given those feelings, why are the sport's leaders trying to make us believe that because of a close final heat in San Diego, everything is rosy? Are they really happy with only five boats showing up at San Diego?

Hydroplane racing has typically billed itself as a spectacle. And, it makes sense to do so. Few things in motorsports

can send a shiv-

er down a person's spine or take one's breath away like the sight and sound of a half dozen Unlimiteds careening across the water together, throwing plumes of white water high into a blue summer sky.

But, except for one heat, that's not the spectacle that hydro fans are getting.

I understand—attracting more boats to this sport is a gigantic challenge. It's not easy to convince somebody to spend as much as a million dollars to campaign a hydroplane for a year and to expect little or no return for their investment. But, you're not going to do it by white washing the situation with happy talk. People are smart enough to see when they're being sold just the sizzle and not the steak.

In order to solve a problem you've first got to admit that the issue exists. I'm concerned that the sport's promoters have become complacent in thinking that one side-by-side race between two boats is all that's needed to declare the mission accomplished. ❖

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**PLEASE JOIN US AT THE NEXT MEETING OF UNLIMITEDS UNANIMOUS**

2 p.m. on Sunday, October 12, 2025  
Shoreline Public Library, 345 NE 175th Street, Shoreline, WA 98155