

## Shane, HomeStreet win everything in San Diego.



Chris Denslow

Jimmy Shane enjoyed a perfect weekend in San Diego. Not only was he the fastest qualifier for the HomeStreet Bank Bayfair event on Mission Bay, he won every heat on Saturday to win the Saturday Showdown event, clinched the national driver's title, and on Sunday won every heat to win the Bill Muncey Cup and clinched the 2022 national championship for his *Miss HomeStreet* team.

By that accounting, it was probably the best weekend a driver and a race

team could ever dream of having.

Taking second-place honors was J. Michael Kelly in *Miss Tri-Cities*, third was Jeff Bernard in *Miss Goodman Real Estate*, and fourth was Jamie Nilsen in *Legend Yacht Transport*. The fifth boat in the pits, *Miss Beacon Plumbing*, was knocked out of the contest when it threw a prop and was damaged on Saturday.

A full report of the action in San Diego will be offered in next month's issue of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*. In the meantime, here's how the national points

standings for the 2022 H1 Unlimited Racing Series turned out:

**RACE TEAMS**—1, U-1 *Miss HomeStreet*, 9,194 points; 2, U-9 *Miss Tri-Cities*, 7,839; 3, U-91 *Miss Goodman Real Estate*, 6,221; 4, U-11 *Legend Yacht Transport*, 3,934; 5, U-40 *Miss Beacon Plumbing*, 3,195; 6, U-8 *Miss Tri-Cities*, 2,058; and 7, U-3 *Griggs presents Miss Ace Hardware*, 875.

**DRIVERS**—1, Jimmy Shane, 9,194 points; 2, J. Michael Kelly, 6,848; 3, Jeff Bernard, 6,221; 4, Jamie Nilsen, 3,934; 5, Corey Peabody, 3,049; 6, Dave Villwock, 2,825; 7, Jimmy King, 875; and Dustin Echols, 370.

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# REMEMBERING ART OBERTO

**T**he sport of unlimited hydroplane racing has lost one of its most enthusiastic sponsors. Art Oberto passed away at his assisted-living apartment in Seattle on August 26. He was 95 years old.

For most of the 40 years beginning in the mid-1970s, Oberto was a fixture in Seattle's Stan Sayres Pits wearing a straw hat; dressed in the bright green, white, and red colors of the Italian flag; and handing out pins, stickers, and pens to all the young fans he ran across. The pens were the four-color type, upon which was printed "Stolen from Art 'Oh Boy' Oberto."

He was a shrewd businessman who inherited the Oberto Sausage

Company from his father, Constantino Oberto, who died in 1943 when Art was just 16 years old. By 1954, Art and his mother had grown the business enough to afford a new factory and eventually it would grow to become one of the nation's largest producers of beef jerky.

Oberto promoted the company with marketing efforts that were considered eccentric by most of those in the business. Beginning in the 1950s, for instance, he proudly drove an Oberto-branded Lincoln Towne Car around town that attracted attention with its green, white, and red paint job. He called it the "Jerky Mobile." And, later, he put that color scheme on hydroplanes.

As the following articles will describe, Oberto began sponsoring the unlimiteds in 1975. But his passion for the sport went beyond that. The home that he shared for many years with his wife, Dorothy, also played a role in



Chris Denslow

Art Oberto (left) was a familiar figure in the hydro pits in Seattle.

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Seattle's hydro history. It was the place, set on the shore of Lake Washington just south of the Floating Bridge, where Bill Cantrell and his Gale IV bounded ashore and landed in the rose garden during the 1954 Gold Cup.

Oberto was preceded in death by Dorothy and leaves four children and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The family has not planned services. ❖

## IN THE BEGINNING:

# The *Oh Boy! Oberto* story.

BY BOB SENIOR

In 1975, the Oberto Sausage Company sponsored its first unlimited hydroplane. Bob Murphy's former U-18 *Red Ball Express* became the U-4 *Oh Boy! Oberto* "Super Salami." The boat tested on Lake Washington on April 15th with "lady driver Pat Ciotta" alongside Bill Wurster.

Chuck Hickling drove *Oberto's* debut at Tri-Cities. At Phoenix and San Diego, the "Salami" was replaced by "Beef Jerky." *Oh Boy! Oberto* finished the season in 13th place out of 18 entries. *Oh Boy! Oberto* finished only one race that season: Tri-Cities. It failed to qualify at Seattle and San Diego, and broke down in Phoenix.

Go back a year to 1974, the year of the Gold Cup race in Seattle at Sand Point. Seafair lost its shirt and had absolutely no credit. They could not have charged a roll of scotch tape. Cash on the barrel head was required. The press told the community that Seafair was broke and on the brink of vanishing.

Art Oberto wrote a letter to the editor of a Seattle newspaper that appeared on the sports page in the spring of 1975. Art wrote:

*"We have to save the Seafair race. It is for our kids. They are out of school*

*all summer. They hear the roar of the hydros. They jump on their bikes and head for the pits. They hang on the fence. They worship the boats and the drivers. They collect the pins. They make scrapbooks. They love the hydros. We have to save the Seafair race; it's for our kids."*

I was then (and still am) the chairman of the guided pit tours at Seafair. I had lost my ticket-printing sponsor for pit tours, so I phoned Art Oberto, explained my volunteer job on the race committee, and he agreed to sponsor printing the tickets. This was only a couple of hundred dollars then.

Meanwhile, KIRO-TV gave Seafair a five-hour telethon. This was about early summer of 1975. A street in front of the KIRO studios in Seattle was closed off and all the local hydros were put on display out front. Most of the local hydro owners and drivers appeared on the telethon. It was a huge success, raising \$56,000, and gave Seattle's Seafair Festival a fresh new start. Otherwise, there may have never been another Seafair race.

Art Oberto was there, on TV. One of his Italian business buddies got him to donate \$500 on-camera. Bill Wurster

(the co-owner of the #6207 hull) cornered Art over a sandwich and coffee and they cooked up the first *Oberto* hydro sponsorship.

The following spring, Wayne Cody held his popular evening radio sports-talk show at Meal Maker's restaurant in Burien. His topics were pro soccer, Mariners baseball, and hydroplanes. The U-4 *Oh Boy! Oberto* was on display outside the restaurant and his hydro guests were Bill Wurster and Art Oberto. During the program, Cody asked Oberto, "How did you originally decide to sponsor an unlimited hydroplane?"

"It's all Bob Senior's fault," he answered. "He got me to sponsor the pit tours!"

Fast forward a bit, what a ride it has been. And, now a national championship to boot!

I'm glad that I had a chance to play a role in it. ❖



# The Oberto boats: Part 1

What follows is a little history about every boat that carried the Oberto name over the years. In this month's segment, we'll cover the *Oberto* hydros that were powered with internal-combustion engines. Next month will be the turbines. This information was originally developed by our former editor, the late Michael Prophet.

## 1st: Hull #6207 (1975-76)

**T**his boat was originally the fourth U-7 *Notre Dame* and was owned by Shirley Mendelson McDonald. It was designed and built by Les Staudacher in 1962, was 30-feet-6-inches in length, 12 feet wide, and weighed 6,700 lbs. The boat had drop sponsons and was powered by a V-12 Allison engine. It raced as *Notre Dame* in 1962 and 1963 then caught fire during a test run in December 1964 with Bill Muncy driving and was replaced by a new *Notre Dame*. Les Staudacher rebuilt the boat into a two-seat pleasure craft for Mendelson McDonald and it returned to racing in 1965 as the U-5 *Shu-Shu*. It later became the *Miss Budweiser* in 1967.

Bob Murphy purchased the boat from Bernie Little in 1970 and raced it under several names—*Burien Lady*, *Smoother Mover*, *Murphy's Marine*—then, in 1975, co-owner Bill Wurster acquired the first Oberto sponsorship. The boat was repainted in green, red, and white Oberto colors.

The U-4 *Oh Boy! Oberto* ran as “Super Salami” in the northern events and “Beef Jerky” in the southern races. Wurster test drove the boat at Stan Sayres Pits early in the season, but he had an obligation to drive the *Sunny Jim Jam*, so Chuck Hickling piloted the *Oh Boy! Oberto* a seventh-place finish at the Gold Cup in the Tri-Cities but did not qualify in Seattle. Wurster then took over, didn't finish in Phoenix, and didn't qualify in San Diego.

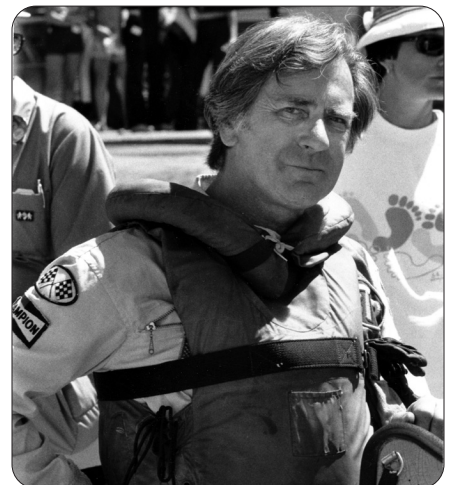
Wurster became the sole owner and driver in 1976 after selling the *Sunny Jim Jam*. About all that was done to *Oh Boy! Oberto* was a registration change to the number. The U-8 *Oh Boy! Oberto* only ran in the three West Coast races. It broke down in the first heat at Tri-Cities, failed to qualify at Seattle, and finished fourth at San Diego. Wurster sold the boat after the season.

## 2nd: Hull #7221 (1977-78 and 1980)

**T**his boat was owned, designed, and built by Bob Gilliam in 1972. The hull was 29-feet-6-inches in length, 12-feet-6-inches in width, and weighed 6,000 lbs. It had an odd, almost straight bow, straight tail fin, and was



Randy Hall



Sue Spornoble

**LEFT:** Chuck Hickling climbs from the cockpit of the first boat to carry the name *Oh Boy! Oberto* after a test run on Lake Washington. The boat was built in 1962 as *Notre Dame*. **RIGHT:** Bill Wurster owned and drove many of the first *Oberto* hydroplanes.



**ABOVE:** The second boat to carry the *Oh Boy! Oberto* name was built as *Valu-Mart* in 1972. It's shown here with Bill Wurster in the cockpit heading out onto the Columbia River at Tri-Cities in 1977. **LEFT:** After sinking at the 1974 Gold Cup, the turbine-powered *U-95* was converted to Allison power and in 1981 became the third boat to use the name *Oh Boy! Oberto*. It's shown here with Scott Pierce driving it at San Diego.

painted orange and white. The new *Valu-Mart* was powered by a V-12 Allison and driven by Bill Wurster. In 1973 the team changed over to a step-type tail fin and added a V-12 Rolls-Royce Merlin engine.

Wurster went from driver to owner in 1977, but continued to drive. The boat was painted in the traditional Oberto colors—red, white, and green—for both 1977 and 1978. It raced as “Super Salami” in the north and “Beef Jerky” down the south. The U-8 *Oh Boy! Oberto* failed to finish at both Tri-Cities and Seattle but placed fourth at the final race of the season, at San Diego.

The *Oh Boy! Oberto* underwent another modification for 1978. The chisel-nose bow was changed to a conventional round nose. Bob Maschmedt drove the boat and David Williams became the crew chief. Wurster raced the entire circuit, though the boat failed to qualify at three events and didn't finish another, it did complete three other races.

Oberto didn't sponsor an Unlimited in 1979, so Wurster ran the boat as the U-8 *Dr. Toyota* then sold the hull to Steve LaCava in 1980. Oberto returned as sponsor that year, but the boat was still in *Dr. Toyota* colors: red, yellow, and white, with black lettering. LaCava was also the driver and Wurster became his crew chief.

The U-8 *Oh Boy! Oberto* raced in Tri-Cities, placing fifth, then finished sixth at Seattle and fifth in San Diego. Wurster became the owner again in 1981 and LaCava the crew chief, but by then the Oberto sponsorship went elsewhere.

### 3rd: Hull #7495 (1981)

**T**he next boat to carry the Oberto name was among the most notable in history, the first successful hydro to be powered with a turbine engine. Originally owned by Jim Clapp, it appeared in 1973 but didn't actually enter a race until 1974. The *U-95* (just a number and no name was considered bad luck, which would



prove to be right), was designed and built by Ron Jones, was a cabover hull, and was powered by two 1,700-horsepower Lycoming T-53 turbines. It was 28 feet in length, 13-feet-6-inches wide, and weighed 5,000 lbs. It also had three rear uprights and a wing.

Jim Clapp died in the spring of 1974 and his wife, Pamela, raced the boat that year. The crew chief was Chuck Lyford and the driver was Leif Borgersen. The tail was lost at Pasco, where it also set a heat record of 113.464 mph, and it ran without the tail at Seattle. While racing at Sand Point on Lake Washington, the turbine blew up and the U-95 sank. The boat was then sold to Pete LaRock, who replaced the turbine with an Allison engine.

LaRock raced it as the U-95 *Shakey's Special*, leased it to Bernie Little in 1976, who ran it as it as *Miss Budweiser* for three races, then it was sold to Chuck King and Roger Janke in 1978. The boat ran that year and in 1979 under several names, such as *Hawaiian Tropic*, *Pat O'Grady's Lakeshore*, and *Barney Armstrong's Machine*. It didn't race in 1980.

Chuck King sold the boat to Bill Wurster in 1980 and he ran it as the U-8 *Oh Boy! Oberto* at three West Coast races and at the World Championship in Acapulco, Mexico. The crew chief



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

In 1982 and again in 1984 a new Fred Leland boat carried the *Oberto* banner. John Prevost is driving the boat here on Mission Bay in San Diego in 1984.

was Danny Heye and the driver was Scott Pierce. It became the last time that Oberto sponsored a Wurster boat.

#### 4th: Hull #8255 (1982 and 1984)

**T**his boat was originally owned and designed by Fred Leland and was built by Ed Karelsen. The hull was 28 feet in length, 13 feet wide, and weighed more than 6,000 lbs. This was a cabover pickle-fork design powered by a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine and was painted in Oberto colors: green, red, and white. Leland and Scott Pierce tested the new boat at Lake Washington before the season started then Pierce drove the boat as U-55 *Oh Boy! Oberto* in the Tri-Cities race, where

it finished last in its first heat, failed to start another, and did not finish a third. At Seattle the engine blew a head gasket and failed to finish.

The boat was then leased to Wurster for San Diego, who campaigned it as the *Executone*. It lost the rudder and collided with the U-25 *Pay 'n Pak* then sank.

Oberto didn't sponsor an Unlimited in 1983; this boat ran as *American Speedy Printing*, *KISW Miss Rock*, and *Miss Houston*, instead. For 1984, the boat was fitted with a rear wing and ran in the three West Coast races as the U-40 *Oh Boy! Oberto*. Both Pierce and John Prevost drove the boat, but it failed to finish at Tri-Cities, and placed fifth at both Seattle and San Diego.

#### 5th: Hull #7664 (1985-86)

**T**his hull was originally owned by Jerry Kalen, designed by Fred Alter, built by Staudacher Marine in 1976, and raced that season as the U-64 *Miss Vernors*. It was 30 feet in length, 13 feet wide, weighed 7,000 lbs., and was a cabover pickle-fork design. It first ran with a stock Allison engine then the following year ran with a turbocharged Allison. The crew chief was Bob Espland and the driver was Jerry Bangs.

The boat raced from 1977 through 1982 with a variety of names—*Miss Esquire Products*, *The Squire Shop*, and *Miss KYYX-FM*—then ran, or tried to,



Leonard Dodd

The fifth boat using the Oh Boy! Oberto name was built in 1976 as *Miss Vernors* and had also seen action as *The Squire Shop*. It's shown here driven by Jerry Hopp at Tri-Cities in 1985.





The most successful of the piston-powered *Oberto* boats was this boat, shown here in 1988 with George Woods, Jr., in the cockpit.

in 1983 as *Miss Beco* at Houston. It was then put in storage and placed up for sale. In 1985, Bill McFadden bought it, replaced its turbocharged Allison engine with a stock Allison, and gave it the familiar red, green, and white paint job of U-4 *Oh Boy! Oberto*. With Al Thoresen as crew chief and Jerry Hopp driving, it entered every race that season and had third-place finishes in both Detroit and Madison, Indiana.

The turbocharged Allison was back in the boat in 1986, George Johnson became the driver, and Doug McIntosh was the crew chief, but it didn't do nearly as well as it had in 1985. It failed to qualify for one race, could not start another, and never crossed the finish line in three others. The boat was retired after the season and sold to someone in New Hampshire sometime during the 1990s.

### 6th: Hull #8200 (1987-91)

**A**fter Bill Muncey died driving the *Atlas Van Lines* at Acapulco in 1981, his wife, Fran, had a replacement hull designed and built by Jim Lucero. The new *Atlas Van Lines* was 28-foot-6-inches in length, 13 feet wide, and weighed 5,600 lbs. It was a cabover pickle-fork with a rear wing and a cockpit that was set more to the left side of the hull. It had cutouts in front that made a small wing forward

and was powered by a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine.

Chip Hanauer drove the boat to national championships in 1982 and '83 then it became the *The Squire Shop* in 1984 through 1986. It also ran as the *Joe Ricci Spirit of America* at three races in '86.

Jim Harvey purchased the boat for 1987, hired Gary Redmond to be the crew chief and George Woods, Jr., as driver, got the Oberto sponsorship, and gave the boat the familiar colors, but with more red. On the way to Miami that first year, the team's truck caught fire and all the tools and six engines were burned, along with the front of the



boat. After that damage was repaired, the boat managed a fourth-place finish in the Tri-Cities, a third-place finish in Seattle, and ended the season eighth in national points.

In 1988, the U-2 *Oh Boy! Oberto* was rebuilt by the crew (much of it to



Photos from Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

**LEFT:** Jim Harvey was the owner of the boat that won the first races with the *Oh Boy! Oberto* name. **RIGHT:** Mark Tate drove the boat in 1990.



complete the repair of damage caused by the fire) and they added an enclosed cockpit to conform to the new safety rules. The team then started the season by winning the race in Miami, added a second-place finish in Madison, was third in Detroit, won another race in San Diego, and ended the season in fourth place in the national standings. Finally, Art Oberto could say that an *Oh Boy! Oberto* boat was a race winner.

No major changes were made to the boat for 1989, yet there were no wins that year. The team's highest finish was second at both Miami and San Diego. Mark Tate took over behind the wheel for 1990. They also attended the race in Honolulu, where they finished second. Because the race was in November, though, it was technically considered a 1991 event.

### 7th: Hull #8803 (1990-92)

Ed Cooper, Sr., and his son, Ed Cooper, Jr., of Evansville, Indiana, owned this hull. It was designed by Ron Jones and built by Mark and Mitch Evans of Chelan, Washington. The hull was 29 feet in length, 12 feet wide, and weighed 6,100 lbs. It was a cabover pickle-fork with a rear wing, had an enclosed cockpit, and was powered by a turbocharged Allison engine.



Ed Cooper, Jr.



F. Peirce Williams



Karl Pearson

**TOP:** Mark Tate drives the *Oh Boy! Oberto* in Detroit in 1990. **ABOVE:** Two boats carried the *Oh Boy! Oberto* name in 1990. The other was driven by Mark Evans at Seattle.

The crew chief was Ed Cooper, Jr., and the driver was Mitch Evans.

The boat ran as the U-3 *Risley's* and *Seaco Aviation Fuel* the first year and used four different names in 1989: *Cooper's Express*, *Miss D.O.C.*, *Miss Chiro Choice*, and *Seaco Aviation Fuel*. In 1990, while Mark Tate was driving the U-2 *Oh Boy! Oberto* Hull #8200, this hydro ran as the U-3 *Oh Boy! Oberto/Wild Waves* at Seattle with Mitch Evans as the pilot. It was the boat's only appearance as *Oberto* that season and finished fifth.

In 1991, the West Coast campaign by the Coopers was sponsored by Oberto. In Tri-Cities and Seattle the boat ran as the U-3 *Oh Boy! Oberto "Beef Jerky,"*

and in San Diego and Hawaii it was *Oh Boy! Oberto "Pork Jerky."* In 1992 the boat raced as the *Oh Boy! Oberto "Beef Jerky"* at Seattle, where the team finished sixth with Mitch Evans driving. Todd Yarling also saw action in the cockpit and the boat ended the year seventh in the nation points. ❖

*From this point on the Oh Boy! Oberto boats were powered with turbine engines. We'll cover that portion of the Oberto history in next month's issue.*



# Gold Cups by the Twos

## Gold Cups in the years ending with a "2" WHAT A RIDE!

Gary Dougherty worked at the *Seattle Times* from 1988 to 2012, spent 12 years in the sports department, and always tried to get as much hydro coverage in the paper from every race across the country. He says his first recollection of the APBA Gold Cup was in the summer of 1981 as he was going to start his junior year of high school at Renton's Hazen High School. Heading to Lake Washington the night before with a bunch of friends and parking near Genesee Park remains a very vivid memory for him. Taking in that mighty roar of the hydroplanes while on the shore, and the huge party on and near Lake Washington Boulevard, hooked him for the rest of his life. He has compiled the following for each of the Gold Cups that have taken place during the second year of each decade beginning in 1952.

BY GARY DOUGHERTY

### August 9, 1952

**T**he 45th Gold Cup was the second time the event was contested on Lake Washington, and the third straight year a Seattle boat (*Slo-mo-shun*) won the regatta. The city was gaga about boat racing—250,000 were on hand for the extravaganza. "From a plane 3,000 feet above the course the crowd seemed to hang together like locusts over every patch of green along the shore," wrote a

reporter for the *Seattle Times*. Six boats showed up for the three-heats, each 30 miles in length (10 laps on the three-mile course).

**SITE:** Lake Washington

**WINNER:** U-27 *Slo-mo-Shun IV* (the boat's second Gold Cup)

**DRIVER:** Stanley Dollar (His only Gold Cup win)

**OWNER:** Stan Sayres (His third Gold Cup victory)

**SECOND PLACE:** U-99 *Miss Pepsi*,

Chuck Thompson

**HISTORICAL IMPLICATION:** Stan Sayers directed his pit crew to put the propeller from the *Slo-mo V* on the *Slo-mo IV* to get her back into the race. The *Slo-mo IV* had failed to finish the first heat when its propeller spun off, then won the second and third heats. In Heat 2, the *Miss Pepsi's* gearbox split open and the 10,500-pound monster ground to a stop. Seattle would hold eight Gold Cups in the 1950s and plant itself as one of the



The 1952 winner *Slo-mo-shun IV* with Stanley Dollar driving

most important stops on the Unlimited hydroplane circuit.

**THIS REALLY HAPPENED:** The *Such Crust IV* exploded and burned to the water line during the second heat. “Wild Bill” Cantrell was picked up from the water in a few seconds by a Coast Guard patrol boat and rushed to the hospital. Cantrell suffered severe burns on his head, arms, and legs. His nose was seared, and his eyebrows were burned off. But his condition was reported satisfactory.

## August 5, 1962

**E**ighteen Unlimiteds entered the 54th Gold Cup, the last to be a 90-mile marathon. Twelve qualifying for the regatta. *Miss Century 21* with driver Bill Muncey, 33, winning all three heats he entered, claimed the 54th Gold Cup. His times for each heat were 17:44, 17:49 and 18:24.

**SITE:** Lake Washington

**WINNER:** U-60 *Miss Century 21* (The boat’s second Gold Cup)

**DRIVER:** Bill Muncey (His fourth Gold Cup)

**OWNER:** Willard Rhodes (His fourth Gold Cup)

**SECOND PLACE:** U-40 *Miss Bardahl*, Ron Musson

**HISTORICAL IMPLICATION:** This was the final Gold Cup that was contested at 90 miles. The 1963 race was changed to

60 miles (four heats at 15 miles each).

**THIS REALLY HAPPENED:** “Between noon and 8 o’clock, Lake Washington was awash with drama, disaster, heroics and hassles,” wrote Georg N. Meyers,

*Seattle Times* sports editor, on a race that took eight hours and 15 minutes to make official. The *Miss Seattle Too’s* driver, Dallas Sartz, was violently pitched from his boat in the first heat and the craft sunk to the bottom of the lake.

## June 25, 1972

**A**dozen boats appeared in the pits for the 64th Gold Cup with 11 boats qualifying at over 100 mph. Bill Muncey won all four heats and scored a perfect 1,600 points on a dismal, rainy day. This was the last year total points for the entire race would determine the winner. “I didn’t feel it was a boat race at all,” said Billy Schumacher, the pilot of the second-place *Pride of Pay ’N Pak*. “As far as I’m concerned, I never want to drive here again. It’s a test of stupidity of courage.”



Bob Carver Photos



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Bill Muncey won the Gold Cups in both 1962 and 1972. **TOP:** He drove *Miss Century 21* to victory on Lake Washington in 1962. **ABOVE:** He did it again aboard *Atlas Van Lines* at Detroit in 1972.





In the year after Bill Muncey's death, Chip Hanauer enjoyed a thrilling come-from-behind Gold Cup victory in *Atlas Van Lines* in 1982.

**SITE:** Detroit River

**WINNER:** U-71 *Atlas Van Lines* (The boat's first Gold Cup)

**DRIVER:** Bill Muncey (His fifth Gold Cup)

**OWNER:** Joe Schoenith [His second Gold Cup]

**SECOND PLACE:** U-25 *Pride of Pay 'N Pak*, Billy Schumacher

**HISTORICAL IMPLICATION:** Bill Muncey, 43, tied Gar Wood's record of five Gold Cup wins, which he accomplished between 1917 and 1921. It took Muncey 10 years to arrive at five. His first came on the Detroit River on 1956.

**THIS REALLY HAPPENED:** The brand-new U-6 *Miss Madison* wrecked during qualifying with rookie pilot Charlie Dunn. As a result, the *Madison* was done for the 1972 season. The race team had stunningly won the Gold Cup at their hometown the year before.

## June 27, 1982

In the most memorable Gold Cup final heat of our era, Chip Hanauer, 27, came from behind in dramatic fashion to beat the two-time defending Gold Cup champion *Miss Budweiser* and Dean Chenoweth. Thirteen boats tried to qualify and 10 made the show.

**SITE:** Detroit River

**WINNER:** U-00 *Atlas Van Lines* (The boat's first Gold Cup)

**DRIVER:** Chip Hanauer (His first Gold Cup)

**OWNER:** Fran Muncey (Her first Gold Cup)

**SECOND PLACE:** U-1 *Miss Budweiser*, Dean Chenoweth

**HISTORICAL IMPLICATION:** This was Hanauer's first of what would become a record-holding 11 Gold Cup victories, including six in Detroit. "This is the finest day I've had in my life," Hanauer said. "I hope Bill (Muncey) is happy." (Muncey had been killed driving *Atlas Van Lines* the year before.)

**THIS REALLY HAPPENED:** Dean Chenoweth was killed driving *Miss Budweiser* later that season at Tri-Cities. During the

first heat at Seattle the following week there was a horrible wreck that included the turbine *Pay 'N Pak*. After the race, *Pay 'N Pak* owner Dave Heerensperger, who won 25 career races, decided to leave the sport for good.

## June 13, 1992

Legends Chip Hanauer and Bernie Little team up for the first time as Hanauer racks up his eighth Gold Cup victory and his first driving Bernie Little's *Miss Budweiser* over the Detroit racecourse. The *Bud* did it in style, sweeping all five heats. Ten boats competed. Before the final, Mark Tate in the *Winston Eagle* jockeyed with Hanauer for



Jim Vota

Chip Hanauer won his eighth Gold Cup while driving *Miss Budweiser* in 1992.



the inside lane and managed to get lane one, but the boat went dead in the water and did not finish.

**SITE:** Detroit River

**WINNER:** U-1 *Miss Budweiser* (The team's eighth Gold Cup)

**DRIVER:** Chip Hanauer (His eighth Gold Cup)

**OWNER:** Bernie Little (His eighth Gold Cup)

**SECOND PLACE:** U-8 *The Tide*, George Woods

**HISTORICAL IMPLICATION:** Hanauer, 37, qualified the "Beer Wagon" at 168.937 mph over the 2.5-mile course. His eighth Gold Cup tied him with Bill Muncey for

the most. The 74th Gold Cup was the only race on the circuit with a clock start; the others had a flag start.

**THIS REALLY HAPPENED:** George Woods finished second in the Gold Cup for the fourth straight year and would be the runner-up again in 1993! Steve David set the record with six. Both drivers never won the coveted trophy.

## July 14, 2002

**D**ave Villwock dominated the 94th Golds Cup as 11 boats competed on the Detroit River. Villwock managed to grab the inside lane

in the final and was never threatened. "The Detroit River is always very challenging and this year it showed its teeth again," declared Villwock. "The river owed me for last year's rough ride."

**SITE:** Detroit River

**WINNER:** U-1 *Miss Budweiser* (The team's 14th Gold Cup)

**DRIVER:** Dave Villwock (His fifth Gold Cup)

**OWNER:** Bernie Little (His 14th Gold Cup)

**SECOND PLACE:** U-99 *Fox Hills Chrysler Jeep*, Terry Troxell

**HISTORICAL IMPLICATION:** This was Bernie Little's 40th consecutive year of participating in the Gold Cup and his final year as the *Bud* owner. Little would pass away in the spring of 2003. His first Gold Cup was in 1963 with the U-13 *Tempo*. This was the only Gold Cup Little did not attend, as his son, Joe, relayed the results to him by cell phone.

**THIS REALLY HAPPENED:** *Budweiser* was the top qualifier at the previous five Gold Cups and again at this race with a run of 156.247 mph. Six different drivers won the eight preliminary heats (Villwock, Brown, Terry Troxell, Mike Hanson, Mark Tate, and Steve David).



Karl Pearson



H1 Unlimited/James Crisp

**TOP:** Dave Villwock drove *Miss Budweiser* to victory in the Gold Cup in 2002. **ABOVE:** Villwock's 10th Gold Cup victory came in the cockpit of *Spirit of Qatar* while racing in Detroit in 2012. It was the boat's fifth straight Gold Cup win and, as it would turn out, the last for Villwock.





Corey Peabody drove U-9 Lynx Healthcare to his first Gold Cup victory on Guntersville Lake, Alabama, earlier this summer.

## July 15, 2012

**A** dozen boats were at the ready for the 103rd running of the Gold Cup. The U-96 *Spirit of Qatar* was a decisive winner, taking all four preliminary heats and the winner-take-all final, defeating *Oh Boy! Oberto* driven by Steve David.

**SITE:** Detroit River

**WINNER:** U-1 Spirit of Qatar (The boat's fifth straight Gold Cup)

**DRIVER:** Dave Villwock (His 10th Gold Cup)

**OWNER:** Erick Ellstrom (His fifth Gold Cup)

**SECOND PLACE:** U-6 *Oh Boy! Oberto*, Steve David

**HISTORICAL IMPLICATION:** It was Dave Villwock's 10th and final Gold Cup victory, an achievement spanning 16 years. It was also the last Gold Cup victory for the Ellstrom family, which started racing Unlimiteds in 1994. Jimmy Shane made his first Gold Cup appearance in the *Graham Trucking*.

**THIS REALLY HAPPENED:** Villwock was the leading qualifier at 162.903 mph. It was the 11th time he had been the fastest, which broke a record held by Bill Muncey.

## June 26, 2022

**T**he 112th Gold Cup had seven boats make the trek to Alabama. After two of the big favorites made mistakes in the winner-take-all final, Corey Peabody, 43, was declared the winner.

**SITE:** Guntersville, Alabama

**WINNER:** U-9 Lynx Healthcare (The boat's third Gold Cup)

**DRIVER:** Corey Peabody (His first Gold Cup)

**OWNER:** Vanessa and Darrell Strong (Their first Gold Cup)

**SECOND PLACE:** U-91 *Miss Goodman Real Estate*, Jeff Bernard

## HISTORICAL IMPLICATION:

Guntersville became just the ninth site for a Gold Cup regatta since 1950. Detroit hosted 37, Seattle 14, Madison and Tri-Cities five, San Diego four, Evansville two, and one each for Reno and Owensboro. It was the first Gold Cup contested in June since 1997.

## THIS REALLY HAPPENED:

Pilots Jimmy Shane (five-time Gold Cup champion) and Dave Villwock (10-time champion) both were disqualified for infractions before the final heat started. Shane won all five heats on the water but was disqualified after the finish when officials ruled that he violated the 80 mph minimum-speed rule. ♦

## Do you have a story to tell?

Is there a story that you wish we'd cover in the *Unlimited NewsJournal*? Perhaps there's an aspect of this sport's history for which you have a personal interest? Maybe your father, mother, grandfather, uncle, aunt, or brother was involved in the sport and was witness to something fascinating that happened? Maybe there's a subject related to Unlimited hydro racing that has fascinated you, a person or event that you'd enjoy researching more fully? If any of the above is true, or if there's any other story about this sport that you'd like to tell, we want to hear from you. The *Unlimited NewsJournal* has been publishing stories about Unlimited hydroplane racing for nearly half a century, but there are many stories that have yet to be told. We'd love for you to tell them. If you want to be a contributor, please contact us at the email address on the back page. We'd enjoy hearing from you and having the chance to discuss your idea!

# MY \$0.02 WORTH

## Editorial Comment by Andy Muntz



**T**he sport of unlimited hydroplane racing is distinctive from other forms of motorsports in many ways. It's older than most, for instance. The sport has a heritage that goes back to a time shortly after the dawn of the 20th century when wealthy yacht club members with motorboats decided they needed some rules for racing each other.

Boat racing is also distinctive because it depends heavily on volunteers. When you go to a major car race, you're likely walking into a facility that is there to make a profit for its owners. The people taking your ticket and showing you to your seat are employees.

But, at an H1 Unlimited event, that's different.

Each hydroplane race is put on by a non-profit civic organization that is made up of volunteers from that community. The people telling you where to park, taking your ticket, providing security, patrolling the course, and emptying the garbage cans are volunteers—and we can't thank them enough.

The civic groups that hold the event on their local lake or river contract with

H1 Unlimited to provide the entertainment—the race itself. And, the people who come as part of the H1 package are mostly volunteers, too. With few exceptions, for example, the people who work on the boats have jobs elsewhere and are using their vacation time to be a crew member at the race.

That's also true of the H1 staff, the people sometimes complained about on Facebook who wear those black shorts and the blue shirts with "official" displayed across the back.

For the past two seasons I have been one of the "Blue Shirts," and I must say it has been an honor to be part of the group. They have all been a joy to be around. In some respects, it feels like I've joined the circus—traveling from town to town putting on boat races for the local fans.

The H1 volunteer team consists of about 25 members who fall into several working groups. There is a team that does the live streaming of the race that you watch on the YouTube Channel. Another team flies the drones that provide

some of the shots you'll see on those broadcasts as well as a view of the action that is being watched by the referees.

Yes, the group includes the referees who officiate the races, the timers and scorers, the pit bosses, and the inspectors who make sure the boats are safe. And, speaking of safety, there are the rescue divers who are on the racecourse in case there's an accident and a nurse who does the physicals and is on hand for all things medical.

It's a team that works remarkable well together, all with the purpose of providing the fans of Unlimited hydroplane racing with the fairest, safest, and most entertaining events possible. They do a terrific job, and are also great fun to be with.

And so, with the San Diego race now wrapped up and with all the Blue Shirts headed in various directions toward home, time for me to say—

Job well done, gang! Have a wonderful offseason. ♦

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

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Check our website for more information.