



NewsJournal Interview by Craig Fjarlie

Skip Schott; Part Three

In the first two parts of our interview with Skip Schott, he recalled his years as a youthful crewmember on *Miss Spokane*. At the end of part two, the damaged boat had been returned to Spokane following the flip in the 1961 Gold Cup. The boat's board of directors held a closing of the books meeting. Bob Gilliam stepped up and paid the organization's remaining debts. As a result, he became owner of the boat. In the next section of the interview, Schott recounts *Miss Spokane's* return to racing as *Miss Eagle Electric*. The interview was conducted in November, 2008, by Craig Fjarlie.



Before and After shots. Above left *Miss Spokane* the end of 1961. ~Bob Greenhow Collection - To the right, the repaired *Miss Eagle Electric* in 1963. ~ Tony Bugeja Collection

How long was Bob Gilliam involved as owner of the boat?

That (next) summer we took a Merlin and a gearbox over to Gilliam. He always wanted to run a Merlin. He put the Merlin with the gearbox in, could've been the original *Fascination*, one of them, and ran at Seattle with a Merlin in it. Then we took the engine back. He always said, you know, "I want you guys to run the boat." At some point he and Kent (Simonson) came to an arrangement that Kent got the boat, for the storage. Gilliam couldn't, he never had any money. We ended up taking a bunch of aluminum over to Gilliam. There was some stuff swapped back and forth. I don't think any money between Gilliam and Kent ever changed hands, 'cause the boat never left where it lived at Simonson Industrial Park, you know, Pancho's little industrial park that he runs. But then the next spring, late winter, early spring, we kinda got together. There's no money, but the boat's at Kent's place so we can work on it. There's a whole lot of stuff you can do without money, for free.



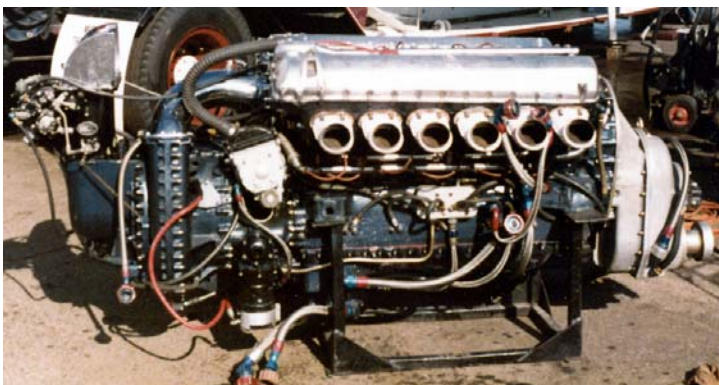
Bob Gilliam in the cockpit of the Merlin powered U-88 *Fascination* (2) at Seattle. In 1962 Bob Gilliam, above, owned the U-02. This was originally the U-1300¹ *Kol roy 1* built in 1960. ~ Russ Knox photo U44,U-771, and U-88. ~ Bob Carver photo

So, some work was done in 1962, then.

A little bit of stuff. It was cleaned up. I took months to get all the mud and stuff out. It had rotated from two or three spots. And then, finally, where Kent's cabinet shop was, he got control of some more of the buildings before he owned them. They were all kind of old, derelict buildings but, you know, if we kept tarps on the roof it didn't leak too bad. So then we started working on motors. The gearbox was good. We'd taken it all apart and preserved it.

Did the engine survive the flip all right?

You know, I don't remember the story on the engine. I don't remember if it hydraulicked, if it sucked in water or not. I just remember that the gear box was good. But engines, you know, you could buy engines that had 300 hours for \$3-to-\$500 delivered in Spokane. New dash nine Merlins were \$1,000 delivered in Spokane. Through the years we had a couple of those. But then, we're playing with the boat, thinking about still running it as *Miss Spokane*. We were all putting time into it so we kinda all were shareholders, but not really. It was the same group of people that were doing this. I worked for Kent in the cabinet shop, too, either just before races or whatever. Taught me how to sand cabinets. He'd build cabinets and I'd sand. So anyway, we were messin' with the boat. By this time some of the Air National Guard guys had gone and Kent and I were doing a lot of the engine work. I was in trade school then, trade school for aircraft mechanics. Being a young kid I knew everything there was to



know about a Merlin, you know. And by this time Dixon Smith and I had become friends. He was getting to work on motors and we'd exchange what we were getting to do. He was learning from real expert people. So we were there to work on the boat one night and Kent says, "Yeah, this guy stopped by and said he might want to sponsor the boat." He says, "I can't even pronounce his name, starts with

an H. He's got this electrical and plumbing place that he just opened in Spokane." I didn't buy any

electrical, plumbing stuff. I didn't know who it was. He says, "He's gonna come by on Thursday night," one of our work nights. And so we're working away and this guy opens the door. He and Kent shake hands. He introduced him around as Dave Heerensperger. And kinda right there, and maybe over coffee between him and Kent, they cut a deal for him to sponsor the boat. And the deal is you can keep the same colors, I want my name on the side. That's Eagle Electric. You know, all right. If you got money, I guess that's what it takes. I have no idea how much money it was, but it was to do what we wanted to do with this quantity of money. You know, it could've been \$5,- \$6,000.

More than you ever had to work with before.

Oh, God, yes, a lot more. And maybe a week or two weeks later, every night that we had work night or something, sometimes Dave would stop by just to see how we're doing, 'cause he was interested. And Kent says, "Yeah, this guy, he doesn't know much about racing, but he's a real sports guy. He's got amateur softball teams, he's got an amateur hockey team, he's really interested in stuff." So, within this next week, or two weeks, he stops by and he opens the door. I'm working on an engine. He says, "C'mon out, I need to have you give me a hand." So I go out and he's got this Chrysler station wagon. In the back are these big cardboard boxes. He says, "Start carrying that stuff in." So, there's like four or five big cardboard boxes. And again he says, "Start opening that stuff up." So I open it up, there's a bunch of plastic and stuff in there. "Yeah, find the right name." I said, "What are you talking about?" He says, "Well, you guys, you work on the boat, you gotta look good. You gotta have jackets." Well, I start taking these out and they're heavy felt, real good quality college lettermen's jackets, with leather sleeves. He couldn't find any lilac or burgundy, but he got red and they got a big patch on the front, beautiful embroidery Miss Eagle Electric U-25 and on the back it says Eagle Electric, and our name's on each jacket. Well, everybody's about crying. Nobody's ever done this, nobody. You know, when we were *Miss Spokane*, we had a brass stencil and in my dad's garage we would stencil on white tee shirts, with stencil paint, the Miss Spokane stencil, which Pancho still has. Some of us, my friend, Chuck, and I, we had lilac overalls and we had paid our own money, like \$15, to get Miss Spokane Hydro embroidered on the back. But nobody'd ever, you know, actually said, "Here, this is yours." What are we gonna have to do for this, you know? We didn't have fancy uniforms, but we had a laundry service that supplied us with white pants and white shirts. And he says, "You gotta subscribe to whatever you need. If you need three pair for a race, or five pair, or whatever you need, do it." We had charge accounts at various places around Spokane and Kent and I were both authorized. I had the time and I'd get out of school and chase parts and buy tools. He says, "Whatever tools you need, buy 'em." Every once in a while we'd ask him, "OK, are we spending



Eagle Electric & Plumbing of Spokane owner Dave Heerensperger. ~ Media photo



Above left, the U-25 *Miss Eagle Electric* at dock in Idaho and crew. From right to left. Bob Hanson with the scarf, Rex Manchester, Chuck Pierce with the white Mobil cap, Kent Simonson, Jack Finlayson with the red cap, Merritt Matkin with white cap. Taking a step forward behind Merritt is the belly of Hardy Holter, and Skip Schott, and somewhere behind the group holding the rope that's attached to the eye on the left rear of the boat. ~ H&RM Collection photo: At right Rex Manchester. ~ Media photo

too much on tools?" You know, we needed some more tools, but, "No, no, you guys gotta have tools to do the job." It wasn't like workin' for Bernie Little or anything, but for us it was...

A big step up.

This is OK. This is all right. He was always real good to work with, you know? But that was a big change. At that point we bought a truck, genuine '53 GMC cabover, only slightly used. And we had our own box that we'd had on loaner trucks before, but we got the GMC and put our box on, and had that repainted. Put new brakes on, and bought new tires. Was a real race boat then.

In 1963, you just ran in the west. Rex Manchester drove.

I think when Heerensperger first sponsored us, Rex drove a little bit for us. Tryin' to remember the year he got arrested.

Oh, yeah.

Heh, heh.

He took over Notre Dame in '64.

'63 when we ran we were *Eagle Electric* then.

Um hmm.

And, then we came to Seattle and Rex was arrested.

Yeah.

Guy comes up and says, "Rex Manchester?" And I say, he was sitting in the boat, "We're gonna run the motor." He says, "Could you have him step down here?" And I said, "Well, we're gonna run the boat, he'll be down in a minute." And



Rex Manchester standing on the deck of *Miss Eagle Electric* after a test run on Lake Washington in 1963. ~ Bob Greenhow Collection

I think it's a reporter or something. And the guy says, "Now." And I say, "Go away." And the guy flashes the badge. He says, "Have him get his ass out of the boat right now." He climbs off the boat, they put his hands behind his back and they handcuff him. They take him away. And Kent's saying, "You can't, what the hell's going on, you can't do this." And they got an arrest warrant and he's gone. By this time he's married to Evelyn and Ole (Bardahl) bailed him out that night. It was a paternity suit then. Some of us know way too much about . . . But even that time Kent could not buffalo the Seattle Police. The next day it was kind of a joke, but still it was a very dramatic thing. On Saturday before the race, your driver's being arrested. Well, now what do we do, you know?

The next year you went to Detroit.

And Kent and I take the boat.

And Norm Evans is driving at this point.

Yes, Norm's driving. We take the boat back. I think we only stayed in maybe two motels all the way to Detroit. Slept in the truck, low-bucked it all the way back. Went quite a ways on Highway 2. Went the scenic route. Went to Detroit. Norm flew in, Heerensperger flew in. Heerensperger paid for Merrit Matkin, Jack Finlayson, guys that worked on the boat. Uncle Bob Hanson flew four or five people into Detroit. This is big bucks, you know. Paid for all the motels and food. We even had a rental car. Well, no, I think the rental car...I think Detroit, because of one of the auto sponsors, I think we got a rental car for free. But, ran Detroit and Norm either jumped or got disqualified. We didn't do real good. But it was fun to go to Detroit 'cause we were big time boat racers.



First trip east with the boat.

Oh, yeah, this was big.

By this time, what was the make-up of the crew? Was it a lot of the same guys who worked on the boat when it was Miss Spokane?

Oh, yeah. Jack Finlayson was still there, and another guy, Johnny Morris. They were both Air Guard people. And by this time I'd probably joined the Air National Guard rather than being drafted. They were the only two Air Guard guys left. Then Johnny kinda dropped out and Jack Finlayson stayed on 'til the end. My mother and his wife were good friends and he was virtually a neighbor, lived eight, 10 blocks away. I'd ride to Guard meetings with him. He was a full time Air National Guard civilian employee. He wasn't in World War II, but was in Korea. The Guard unit got deployed, they fought the Korean war in England. One of the fighter squadrons from England got transferred to Korea and they took their place in England. So all the Guard guys, the permanent ones, some of 'em had English wives.

Well, after Detroit, you went to New Town, North Dakota.

Well, we left the boat 'cause there was this gap.

OK, yeah.

We left the boat in a farmer's barn in Minot. The farmer took us to the train station. Kent and I rode the train from Minot, North Dakota to Spokane, which is about a 14 day trip! (Actually about 18 hours – Ed.) That was the longest train trip I'd ever been on at that point. You can see why America's rail system went to hell. That was the low point of the passenger rail system. Then there was maybe



Above the pits at New Town, North Dakota from a hill. ~ David Volpi photo

another week-and-a-half or something. Between that time, I bought a Honda 90 motorcycle. My girlfriend, Karen, who is now my wife, she and I rode the motorcycle around a lot. We had an unpleasant encounter with a deaf cocker spaniel who survived much better than we did. We laid the bike down and I scraped up my elbows and knees and put about an inch and a half of the license

plate bracket through her ankle and cut tendons. At this point I've never met her mother so I'm startin' out on real good terms here. She had just signed up for a Master's program at Whitworth, and now she's in the emergency room getting her foot fixed. She's on crutches and she's got a little studio apartment that's upstairs. She has to come and live in my parents' living room which her mother didn't approve of. So, then another week and a half and we head for New Town. Kent and I and Karen and Pancho climb in Kent's Imperial and make a 500 mile run to Miles City, Montana, where my wife's mother and family is, and I meet her mother at that point. We leave her off and Pancho and Kent and I go on to Minot. By this time someone has taken the boat out of the farmer's barn and has it displayed in town. And then we do the New Town experience. New Town's out in the middle of nowhere. It's on the Missouri River and they control it with several dams. The level of the river can change six feet in two hours. It's a lake but it's the river and it's kind of an amazing place. And New Town, it was a new town, the old town was obliterated by this lake. They drug some just derelict old rattle trap single-wide mobile homes out there for the crews to stay in. Since we didn't have any money we stayed in those. Everybody else stayed in Minot or someplace else. We ran there, I don't think we did very well. We didn't bring any trophies or money home or anything.

The next race is Coeur d'Alene.

I took the boat. Kent and his wife and Pancho headed for Spokane. The rest of the crew headed home. I took the boat from New Town to Miles City, Montana, picked up Karen who is still on crutches, and we bring the boat from Miles City to Coeur d'Alene. We go over MacDonald Pass which is real high and steep. Our '53 GMC flathead truck is not performing well. It's like, 100 degrees out and I have to torque the cylinder head and climb down an embankment and get extra water for it. It's a real adventure. Instead of doing it in one day, it takes about a day and-a-half.



Above, the U-25 *Miss Eagle Electric* is launched in Idaho's Coeur d'Alene Lake. ~ Eileen Crimmin photo

Well, they don't know where I am. I'm late and the crew is standing around on the beach at Coeur d'Alene, waiting for the boat. One of the guys that worked on the boat, his father was a truck driver.

He had seen the boat somewhere, and, "It ought to be here any minute." Well, it wasn't there for another half day. I was kinda out of favor for a while, but nobody else volunteered to drive the boat truck and since I was going to school and off in the summer, I had the time. And then we ran Coeur d'Alene, and then ran Seafair. And then Tahoe.

You went to San Diego, too.

That's where the boat was sold.

Yeah.

Ran Tahoe, and Kent and his wife went over to see his brother-in-law in California. Merrit Matkin and I took the boat from Tahoe to San Diego. Qualified pretty well and ran, I think two heats. One thing we didn't do. We had a check list early on. The only other people that had check lists were the *Maverick*, and *Thriftway* maybe had one, and the *Bardahl* had one. Other people, they just did it. Well, we had a check list 'cause of the military people. One of the things we never did, if we



Miss Eagle Electric and Norm Evans chase Billy Schumacher in the U-21 \$ Bill at Seattle. ~ H&RM photo



Norm Evans in the cockpit of Miss Eagle Electric about to head on Lake Tahoe for a speed run. ~ Eileen Crimmin photo

weren't changing engines or doing something, we never put a wrench on the prop nut to make sure the engine would turn over still. So we fueled the boat and put it in the water. Norm got in and hit the starter and it went "clunk." The shaft coupling moved about a quarter of an inch. He did this two or three more times and it just went "clunk." It wasn't the starter, something was bad . . .

Bound up inside or . . .

And I jumped down. I had a real huge, big screwdriver with a 24-inch shaft on it. I jumped down and put it on the shaft coupling. Didn't think I could do it but I bent the screwdriver shaft. I tried going both ways and it wouldn't. There was like a gear broken off in the gear box. We didn't know it. We could've changed engines, but we just didn't know it. So, it's kinda anti-climactic. And unbeknownst to all the rest of us, including Dave Heerensperger, that night Kent sells the boat to Jim Herrington.

Now, Kent was actually considered the owner?

Oh, yeah, 'cause he and Gilliam had made this deal. We never made a formal contract with the rest of us being part owner, but we had sweat equity in it.

So Gilliam had nothing to say about selling it, or anything like that, it was all Kent.

No, all Kent. He sold the boat, truck, all the motors, everything except his personal tools and my motorcycle which I had with me at that point. I had taken it to Tahoe and ridden it at Tahoe, and ridden it at San Diego, and now the boat's been sold. He didn't tell me the boat had been sold until the next

morning. I got a tool box and a motorcycle and they're in San Diego and the boat's going to Michigan. Well, first of all, I'm not real happy with Kent sellin' the boat because he didn't tell or ask, but it was his to sell. I never did ask him how much he sold it for. I have no idea, haven't got a clue. Pancho may know. Someday I'll ask him. He may not know either. So I spent a half day begging people, anybody that was headin' back to Seattle, to take my motorcycle. I was at a point where I was gonna have to sell the motorcycle on the spot to somebody that just had some cash. It was, like, had 1,000 miles on it. Brand new Honda 90. And my tool box. Leo Vandenberg didn't want to take the motorcycle 'cause he was always afraid of getting caught overweight. Ole had had a bad experience one time and told him, "Never be overweight." I finally begged Leo, and Dixon, I think he put in a voice, and maybe Jerry Zuvich said, "Take the damn motorcycle." Somebody else took my tool box, I forget who. Anyway, Leo took the motorcycle and I did hear later they weren't overweight. He had room and, you know, it was all right. I was kinda distraught that Kent had sold the boat. We left the pits and I never looked back at the boat. I never saw it. He took me to the bus station and I had enough money to ride the bus home. And I had tonsillitis all the way home. The boat got to some place, Arizona, New Mexico, or something, and there was some kind of accident. Years later people in a wrecking yard in Arizona, New Mexico, saw our box that said Miss Eagle Electric. The truck was wrecked. The boat didn't get hurt but the truck got hurt. Never heard the details of that. And it ended up going back to Herrington's in Michigan.

Yeah, Miss Lapeer.

I came back, got my tonsils out, and had finished aircraft school. I knew I wanted to come to Seattle. I wanted to live over here. I knew there was a position available at Bardahl. I came over and by this time my future wife was teaching school over here. But that was clear out in Federal Way. So I stayed with them, her and her roommates for a couple days, and spent a lot of time talking to Leo tryin' to convince him to hire me, 'cause they were gonna do the cabover the next year. They needed a person that was experienced. He and Musson hadn't developed a budget for the next year, so he didn't know if he really could. Well, the guy who I was taking the place of, he had quit. Jerry was full time, and he (Leo)



The former *Miss Spokane* now renamed the U-25 *Miss Eagle Electric* is launched at San Diego's Mission Bay. ~ H&RM Collection photo



Above, new *Miss Eagle Electric*/*Miss Lapeer* owner Jim Herrington ~ H&RM Collection photo

was, and I knew they needed three full time guys plus the evening and Saturday people. So finally Leo hired me and I went to work for them just a few days before Thanksgiving in '64.

So you were with them through the '65 season.

Right.

In the next installment of the interview with Skip Schott, he recounts the 1965 season working on *Miss Bardahl*. He sees the new cabover boat under construction, and that summer celebrates his first win as a crew member. More great memories, more funny stories; be sure to read part four of the interview with Skip Schott in the *Unlimited NewsJournal*.



#5825 Miss Lapeer

The U-25 *Miss Spokane* (1958-'61)/*Miss Eagle Electric* (1962-'64) and U-9 *Miss Lapeer* ran from from 1965 to 1967. At left, Norm Evans in the U-9 *Miss Lapeer* at Seattle in 1965; notice the damage to the rear deck. ~ Kirk Pagel photo; Below left, the U-9 *Miss Lapeer* launched at Madison in 1966. At right, *Miss Lapeer* being launched in Seattle's Lake Washington. ~ Sandy Ross Collection photos



The last year *Miss Lapeer* raced Jim Herrington entered every race of the 1967 season. Warner Gardner and #5825 failed to finish the last three races, Kelowna, Sacramento, and San Diego. It was retired after the season. At right, Warner Gardner and *Miss Lapeer* return to the quill shaft lagoon at Seattle. they finished sixth here. ~ Sandy Ross Collection photo





HydroFile
Lon Erickson

credentials first in 2013, driving for **Mark Evans** in the #57 FEDCO hull. ~ Chris Denslow photos

U-5/7: **Jesse Robertson** has been tabbed by Team Porter, to drive the second hull, the U-7 *Graham Trucking* (T-5 hull) for the 2015 season. **Ted Porter** announced the move, brought on by **Cal Phipps** going to Wiggins Racing. Jesse Robertson most recently drove the Centurion Racing's #12 *Miss DiJulio* at the 2014 Oryx Cup. Jesse earned his H1 driving



U-9: The Jones Racing Team RedDOT is back to their shop in Kent, WA. after returning from Doha. A new development coming out of the U-9 camp is "Rocket Man" **Jon Zimmerman** has stepped down as driver for Jones Racing unlimited hydroplane. Jon will be redirecting his spare time to personal and family commitments.

From Jon: "It is time for me to step down as driver for the U-9 team. Hydroplane racing is a huge time commitment and I have been spreading myself too thin with work, racing, and family. My son Jack is almost 9 and I need to commit more time to him and his activities.

I could not have had a better opportunity than I have had with the U-9. I have traveled the world and met some of the best racers and fans in motorsports. **Mike** and **Lori Jones** have been great to my family and me. The team is very dedicated and worked extremely hard and sacrificed long hours to give me a first class race boat to drive. I will miss it.

Thank you very much for the great ride and I wish you all the best. Jon Zimmerman"

From Jones Racing: As for the future of the U-9 Jones Racing team, it is uncertain at this point how it will move forward in its commitment to racing in 2015 and beyond at this time. We will keep you posted. In late breaking news, **Scott Liddycoat** will be their new driver. ~ Facebook photo

U/gbr11: The *Peters & May* is back from Qatar and in the shop. The boat is stripped and the crew is cleaning it out. At right *Peters & May* on edge while the crew work on it. ~ Facebook photo



U-27: Cal Phipps moves to the new unlimited team, Wiggins Racing. Cal has driven for the Wiggins family previously in multiple smaller classes including the Grand Prix boats.

The former U-17 OGR hull and equipment is now in the Wiggins Racing shop in Gadsden, Alabama. **Charley Wiggins** reports they are now in the process of setting up shop and putting their crew together. The team will now carry the U-27 designation for Wiggins Racing, a connection to the original number their family used when they started racing. Below the U-17 traveling and in new shop. ~ Facebook photos



The Webster Racing team arrived home to Reading, PA. after some treacherous roads and **Steve Webster** suffering a bout of food poisoning on the way. **Ted Grange** and **Steve Peterson** came to the rescue to help get the U-22 home safely. The boat is home now, cleaned up, and ready for some winter maintenance. Below left the U-22 boat shop. At right, the cleaned U-22 inside the shop. ~ Facebook photo



U-37: In February, after discharge from the *Liberty Promise* voyage to Jacksonville, Fl. the #37 Schumacher Racing hauler and raceboat was spotted in New York, just outside of Buffalo. At this point, it has not been determined precisely why the equipment is in that area. The *Unlimited NewsJournal* has attempted to contact the Schumacher's for an update on the status of the team. There was a listing of the team for sale in Yacht Brokerage advertisement however we don't know at this time if this is related. ~ Facebook photo



U-96: Early February, **Kip Brown** announced his resignation as driver of the U-96 *Qatar*. He spoke of conversation with **Erick Ellstrom** and thanked the entire team for the opportunity to run the new boat. He remarked this move is not the end of the road for him and the choice to leave was his, based on chemistry and a difference in his position within the team structure, as compared to his previous team. ~ Chris Denslow photo



February 9th, the vessel *Liberty Promise* delivered the balance of H1 fleet to the port of Jacksonville, FL., where they cleared customs and headed to their home shops across the country.



Around the Circuit
Chris Tracy

Here's what I have heard over and over again. "We need more boat sponsors. We need a H1 title sponsor or more H1 series sponsorship. We need a race sponsor or additional sponsorship for this or that race." As we start thinking about the 2015 season, we should keep in mind all the sponsors that help fund the sport and how hydro fans can support and retain sponsors. We need to spread the word that **Hydro Brand** is good business.

What does it mean to patronize and support our sport's sponsors? Look carefully at what local and national businesses support the sport and if businesses have products that one can use, seek them out and give them a opportunity for your business. Look at sponsorship signage on the boat hulls, the big stickers and the little ones, too, and if there are decals for products that you can use, seek them out. Look at

the race program and see who advertises in the program and, also, identify race sponsors; for products you can use, patronize the advertisers in the program and the businesses that are title and supporting race sponsors. Do the same for sponsors of the H1 series. Maybe most important, when possible, tell the business that you are giving them a chance or purchasing their products because they support unlimited hydroplanes and **Hydro Brand** is important to you as a consumer...talk with employees, write letters, send email, etc.

So do I practice what I preach? Yes, in small and big ways . . . and you should consider doing the same. **Small ways.** I like Oberto Turkey Jerky and buy it regularly at COSTCO or at the Oberto Factory Store in South Seattle. Generally when I purchase jerky at the Oberto Factory Store I mention to the clerk, manager or whoever I can find, that I choose Oberto brand because of their hydro sponsorship. Each year the media coordinator for the Tri-Cities race throws a party before the race and every year I bring a large bag or two of Oberto Turkey Jerky with me to the party to share. When Budweiser was a series and boat sponsor, Bud was my brand when I ordered beer at restaurants. I've gone to races and noted what gas brands advertised in the race program and made sure I filled my car or the rental car up with that brand. I've booked hotels that were boat or race sponsors and left a notes for the manager and told them I stayed there because they were **Hydro Brand**; one note was published in the Outrigger Hotels Employee Newsletter after I left it for the manager years ago while attending a Hawaii race. Similar stories for restaurants, pizza, oil additive sponsors and more. **Big ways.** Frank Kenney (Toyota, Mazda) sponsored hydros for years in the 1980s. I went to their dealer and bought a Toyota and later a Mazda and made it clear that I selected their dealership because they supported hydros. In the late 1990s, Chrysler sponsored

the Detroit race and that got me into a Seattle Chrysler dealer, where I bought a PT Cruiser; I sent a note to Detroit race leadership and let them know that the Detroit race sponsorship got me into a Seattle dealer which lead to a Chrysler purchase, actually two over the years. For years, Dr. Ken Muscatel had Computers and Applications as his boat sponsor; I bought a Mac and a printer from them and told the salesman why I picked their store. PEMCO insurance sponsored the vintage unlimited boats at Seattle's Seafair race for a few years. PEMCO was my insurance company, but every few years I check rates and did the first year PEMCO sponsored the vintage boats. Although I got a quote from a company that was slightly lower than PEMCO, I stayed with PEMCO due to their support of the vintage hydroplanes and emailed them with my rationale. And you can bet, the next time I need an appliance, I'll be heading to Albert Lee Appliance FIRST. Fairly recently, my wife and I retired and eventually we will relocate to Tri-Cities; you can bet that HAPO will get our bank business—they have earned our business with their enthusiastic sponsorship of the Tri-City race.

And for a recent purchase, let me relay one last story. I needed a couple of tires and a battery for one of my cars. The old tires on the car were from a box store, but decided that this time I should give Les Schwab Tires a shot for my business and I headed to my local Les Schwab store in the burbs of Seattle. I purchased two tires and a battery. When I went to pick up the car and pay, the store manager happened to ring up the sale. I explained that I was a hydro fan and thanked Les Schwab for their support of the U-9. Not only did he thank me for the feedback, but told me all about the Les Schwab sponsorship. He mentioned that it first started with providing tires for the U-9 truck and trailer. Later the sponsorship was expanded beyond tires. He told me all about the Les Schwab regions for advertising and that they were sorry that in 2014 the Sacramento race was canceled as that California region likely would have provided support for the boat at that race. Truly, the store manager was excited and knowledgeable about the sponsorship and supportive of the Jones family and their team. I left knowing that he was appreciative that I had given feedback about their boat sponsorship, happy that the 9 sponsorship brought me in as customer and confident he would pass the information up the management chain.

Do you have stories of how you have supported Hydro Brand? If so, please email them to the *Unlimited NewsJournal*. Our email address is: unewsjournal@gmail.com.

I'd be remiss if I did not thank a long-time supporter of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*. For several years, Silver Lake Dental Arts/**Dr. Brent Kellogg** has made a donation to the *Unlimited NewsJournal* that has been helpful in underwriting a portion of our publication costs. Dr. Kellogg was also recognized in 2014 for his financial contributions to the Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum. [Dr. Kellogg's ad is on last page of our monthly issues.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DRRRA ANNOUNCES ITS CLOSURE

On Friday, February 13, 2015 1:36 PM, Lauren Maiman wrote;

Detroit, Michigan (February 13, 2015) — The Detroit River Regatta Association, which has produced the annual Detroit Gold Cup boat races for the past 13 years, will cease operations effective February 28, 2015.

Despite a loyal core fan base, the DRRRA has found it increasingly difficult to generate the necessary support to stage the event.

"Hydroplane racing has been a great Detroit tradition, and we are not pleased to see our role end this way," said **Bill Rands**, Chairman of the DRRRA Board of Directors. "But after running at a deficit for the past several years, it has become undeniably apparent that we cannot continue."

In November, the DRRA announced a new summer event, which they planned to produce in place of the Gold Cup races. Due to today's news, The Festival of Speed will no longer be taking place.

The Midnight Oil Group

William C. (Bill) Rands, Chairman
Detroit River Regatta Association

RECENT DETROIT NEWS: FROM STEVE DAVID

H1 Unlimited Chairman **Steve David** is already working on a plan to keep unlimited hydroplane racing on the Detroit River.

"The DRRA has been the host organization for the Detroit APBA Gold Cup unlimited hydroplane since 2003 and we need to thank the DRRA for their support for the past 11 years," said H1 Unlimited Chairman Steve David. "It is important to recognize Bill Rands, **Tom Bertolini**, **Mark Weber** and all the volunteers who worked and sacrificed so much to keep the boats racing on the Detroit River.

"Detroit Mayor **Mike Duggan** outlined 'revitalization initiatives' for the city during his State of the City address, and we too are putting our 'revitalization initiatives' together for the boat races in Detroit," added David. "DYC's (Detroit Yacht Club) immediate past Commodore **Fred Carr** will co-lead a new organization that will work to bring the unlimited hydroplanes to Detroit in 2015. We owe it to our fans and the Motor City to do what we can to keep this great Detroit tradition going."

"The boat owners, drivers and everyone involved in H1 will work with local business and community leaders to keep hydroplane racing alive in the Motor City for the thousands of fans who have made this race a Detroit tradition."

"We are going to need another effort like we witnessed in 2003, but I am confident we can keep Detroit as a race site for our series," said David. "Detroit has a tradition of hosting boat races going back to 1916, and this city is important to the sport.

"The boat owners, drivers and everyone involved in H1 will work with local business and community leaders to keep hydroplane racing alive in the Motor City for the thousands of fans who have made this race a Detroit tradition."

Sports and Seattle



Heritage
Craig Fjarlie

Super Bowl XLIX initiated sports hysteria in Seattle that exceeds anything I've seen before. The Seahawks football team was the top story on every television news program in the days leading up to the game, and in post-game coverage. People drove around town with Seahawk flags flying from their cars, fans wore jerseys with the names of Seahawk players on them, houses and businesses were decorated with banners and lights in Seahawk colors, and the *Seattle Times* found the resources to print souvenir sections. Seahawk mania was everywhere. When the game was over and the shocking loss had sunk in, pity parties went on late into the evening.

The civic reaction was reminiscent of the 1955 Gold Cup, when a disbelieving public learned *Gale V*, not *Miss Thriftway*, was the winner based on bonus points awarded for the lowest elapsed time. From that point forward, Seattle news reports almost always referred to the bonus points as "controversial."

I've lived in Seattle for a long time now. I remember when there were no Seahawks, no Mariners, no Supersonics, no Sounders, no Storm. There were only University of Washington Husky teams, Rainiers baseball, Totems hockey, and hydroplanes. I also remember when there were Boeing airplanes, but no Microsoft and no Starbucks. Jimi Hendrix was from Seattle, but he had to leave town to make it in the music business. Grunge was unknown. What a difference the decades have made.

The recent Seahawk mania would lead one to believe Seattle had never experienced a winning team at any



time in the past. Truth is, Seattle has had a lot to cheer about going back almost 100 years. It wasn't just the *Slo-mos* who produced winners that represented Seattle. At right, *Slo-mo-shun IV* and *Slo-mo-shun V* at Seattle. ~ H&RM Collection photo

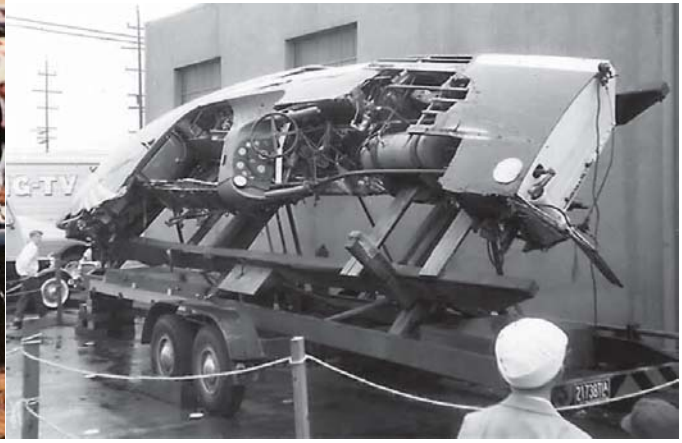
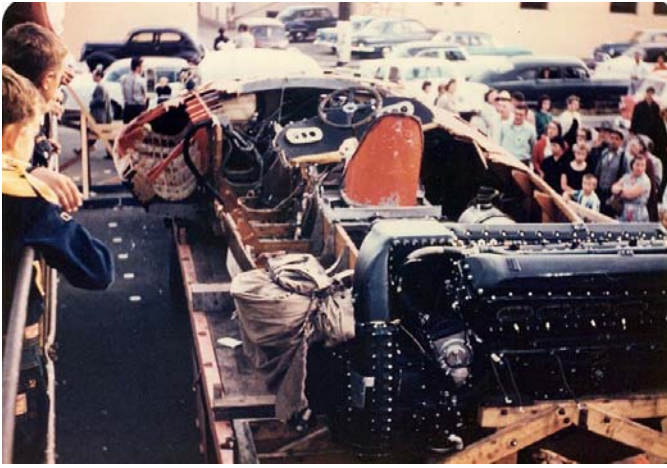
In 1917, Seattle had a professional hockey team. The *Metropolitans* won the coveted Stanley Cup when they beat Montreal. Seattle's team was the first on the U.S. side of the border to win the trophy. Years later, Seattle had the *Totems*, a team in the Western Hockey League. The *Totems* won championships in 1959, 1967, and 1968.

Seattle had a baseball team in the Pacific Coast League. The *Indians*, as the team was known at the time, won the PCL championship

in 1924. The re-named *Rainiers* won titles in 1940, '41, '42, '51, and '55. The last two titles occurred as unlimited hydroplane racing for the Gold Cup was gripping Seattle's sports scene. The *Rainiers* were the top sports team in Seattle during the 1940s and '50s. Part of the enthusiasm for the *Rainiers* was undoubtedly a result of the unique style and knowledge of radio broadcaster Leo Lassen.

The University of Washington Huskies had football teams that went to the Rose Bowl a number of times. One of the top players in the late 1940s was Hugh McElhenny, who went on to a career with the San Francisco 49ers. The Huskies have won the New Year's Day Rose Bowl seven times. They also won the Orange Bowl once. Before the Seahawks were formed in 1976, Rose Bowl victories were a big accomplishment in Seattle sports.

Hydroplanes helped put Seattle on the national sports map. At first, the *Slo-mos* were something of a curiosity, but reporters such as Bill O'Mara, Keith Jackson, and Cliff Harrison helped explain the intricacies of the sport and before long Seattle was "hydro happy." KING-TV broadcast the final heat of the 1957 Gold Cup live to the entire country. It was the first live national telecast to originate in Seattle. Crowds filed past the battered remains of *Slo-mo-shun IV* and the first *Miss Thriftway* when they were on display in the KING-TV parking lot. Crowds



Above left; The wreck of the U-27 *Slo-mo-shun IV* and very large crowd. ~ H&RM Collection photo; At right the U-60 *Miss Thriftway* wreck on tilt. ~ Kirk Pagel photo;



also met Bill Muncey at the airport after the 1956 Gold Cup and when he returned home following his injuries at Madison in 1957. Seattle held a world's fair in 1962, called the Century 21 Exposition. President Kennedy helped open the gate from the White House on the fair's first day, and Elvis Presley filmed a movie around the fair. City officials were certain the fair would provide extra exposure for Seattle. *Miss Thriftway* was renamed *Miss Century 21* for the 1961 and '62 seasons to help promote the fair. ~ H&RM Collection photo

At about the same time, one reporter suggested Seattle had an inferiority complex; it was the little city way off in the corner of the country. I remember as a child how unusual it was when Seattle was mentioned on a network

TV program. At the time it was made, the remark about an inferiority complex was possibly true. I attended the University of North Texas in the early 1970s. One of the other students noticed I lacked the typical Texas drawl. "Where are you from?" he asked. "Seattle," I replied. "Oh," he said, "I was there for the world's fair. Let's see now, is Seattle in Washington or Oregon?" I helped him with his geography and recalled the comment about Seattle's inferiority complex.

In 1969, Seattle city officials promoted a ballot measure called Forward Thrust. It was intended to help provide Seattle with development projects and funds to obtain expansion franchises and construct stadiums for professional sports teams. Bill Muncey did his part. He had a huge sign mounted on the deck of the bobtail *Miss U.S.* and drove the boat back and forth beside the Highway 520 floating bridge, encouraging people to support the initiative. The measure passed by a substantial margin.

Seattle has had a long affection for college basketball. Seattle University's varsity team managed to beat the Harlem Globetrotters in 1955, the only college team to score a victory over the Globetrotters. Elgin Baylor played for Seattle U and was named the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer's* Sports Star of the Year for 1958. Baylor went on to a noteworthy career with the NBA. Seattle's first professional sports franchise in modern times was the Supersonics basketball team. They won the NBA championship in 1979, making up for a disappointing loss the year before. The team also lost the championship in 1996. The Sonics relocated in Oklahoma City a short time later and Seattle no longer has an NBA team.

Seattle tried its luck with major league baseball with the Pilots in 1969, but the team lasted only one season before moving away. The Pilots played in the stadium the Rainiers had used years before, and it failed to fully meet Major League Baseball standards. Seattle was unable to guarantee a new stadium for the 1970 season.

In the mid-1970s, Seattle's Kingdome was built. A new MLB team, the Mariners, was formed. At about the same time, the Seahawks came into existence. The first pre-season Seahawks game, in 1976, took place on the same day as the Tri-Cities race; that was the year it rained on the hydros.

The Mariners have been in post-season playoffs four times, 1995, '97, '00, and '01. The last year was when the team won 116 games. In spite of those accomplishments, the Mariners have yet to advance to the World Series.

Although Seattle no longer has an NBA team, the city does have a WNBA franchise. The Seattle Storm won championships in 2004 and 2010.

Major league soccer also has made a connection with Seattle fans. The Sounders won the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup in 2009, the team's first season, and repeated in 2010, '11, and '14. Last year the team also claimed the MLS Supporter's Shield.

That brings us back to the recent Super Bowl. Over the years, Seattle has had a lot of success to cheer about, including the Super Bowl victory in 2014. Yet the mania surrounding Super Bowl XLIX could lead one to believe Seattle had never claimed a sports title at any time in its history. There are numerous reasons, of course. Pro football is carefully and effectively promoted, network TV has a huge financial interest in the game, and players do commercials and public service announcements. (Seahawk players are doing ads for Beacon Plumbing.) More than a decade ago someone I know referred to pro football as America's national religion. That observation may draw a rebuke from some quarters, but the game has certainly replaced baseball as the country's pastime. Hydroplane racing still draws a crowd to the shores of Lake Washington, but nothing like the mass of people who gathered to watch the roostertails fly 60 years ago. Below left, the Mt. Baker pits at Seattle in 1952. The shoreline in the background was just crowded with people. At right, Stan Sayres Park in 1957, where races are still held today. Notice the very large crowd on hand in background to watch the A.P.B.A. Gold C up.



A week after Super Bowl XLIX was over I was hoping the Seahawk mania would subside, even a little. I don't have a problem with people who love a certain sport; I'm that way with hydros. But the constant news reports about the Seahawks, the banners that fly from car windows, and people who regularly wear jerseys can become overbearing. The emotions of the loss have started to diminish, but Seattle is still gung ho for its Seahawks. Maybe I'm just jealous, or unable to accept changing times, but I still wish the city did the same for hydroplanes.

The author wishes to thank Allen Stiles for assistance with Seattle sports history information.

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