

UNLIMITED NewsJournal

A CHRONICLE OF SPEED

NOVEMBER 2021

Two champs crowned, but racing disappoints.

BY MAC CLOUSE

Is a race with little racing still a race? After the Tri-Cities race, hydro fans were looking forward to the season-ending event in San Diego. The previous three races had three different winners, with some competitive racing. The San Diego Bayfair would determine three winners: the national high-point champion, the driver champion, and the winner of the Bill Muncy Cup.



Chris Denlow

J. Michael Kelly in *Miss Tri-Cities* (left) and Jimmy Shane in *Miss HomeStreet* both left San Diego as national champions

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TOP: The pit area on Vacation Isle and along the shore of Mission Bay in San Diego.

ABOVE: Race organizers said they were happy with the attendance for the 2021 HomeStreet Bank San Diego Bayfair event.

Entering the San Diego weekend, U-1 *Miss HomeStreet* had an 819-point lead over U-8 *Miss Tri-Cities*. Because Jimmy Shane only raced the U-1 in one heat in Guntersville, J. Michael Kelly led Shane by 210 points for the driver championship.

The Bayfair officials purchased the six-boat package from H1. It included six boats, three two-section heats, and a final.

Unfortunately, about a month before the race, Rob Graham told H1 that his U-12 *Graham Trucking* would not be in San Diego. The damage to the rear of the boat from the broken propeller blade in the Tri-Cities final did more damage than was estimated. Repairs could not be done in time to be in San Diego.

The competitive U-12 would be replaced by Kelly Stocklin's U-440 *Bucket List Racing*. Because regular driver Dustin Echols had a prior commitment, 70-year-old Stocklin would drive, breaking

67-year-old Dave Villwock's record set earlier this year.

Two and a half weeks before the race, it appeared that the six-boat field would be diluted even more when J. Michael Kelly broke his right collar bone while playing on bikes with his sons. Kelly still wanted to drive and would try it in San Diego. Kip Brown, who drove the U-8 built for the Ellstrom family in 2014, was announced as the U-8 backup driver. Kelly did drive in each heat. Between heats, his arm went back in a sling.

After seven disappointing heats, including a penalty-filled final on Sunday afternoon, the result was two winners: *Miss HomeStreet* won the national high-points championship and Kelly won the driver championship and the Bill Muncy Cup.

Testing

The six boats in the pits were U-1 *Miss HomeStreet* (Jimmy Shane), U-8 *Miss Tri-Cities* (J. Michael Kelly), U-9 *Pinnacle Peak Consulting* (Corey Peabody), U-11 *J&D's* (Jamie Nilsen), U-40 *Miss Beacon Plumbing* (Dave Villwock), and U-440 *Bucket List Racing* (Kelly Stocklin).

Prior to the testing, Shane talked about his plans for the weekend. "I am excited to be back in San Diego to represent the sponsor of our boat and the race. Our number one goal this weekend is to win the national championship. Then we'll go for the race win.

"My experience in the Tri-Cities final has taught me to be more aggressive. It has been a tough year for JMK [Kelly]. I would love to race against him, but I am concerned about his safety. I

will miss competing with Andrew [Tate]. I want to win on the water against the competition, not win in the pits.”

Kelly had some advice for the other drivers, “Don’t ride BMX bikes; leave that to the kids. I may be done for the year. I really want to drive here, but I am having second thoughts. I’ll see how it feels and may share some driving with Kip.”

All the boats except *J&D’s* went out in the morning test session. Stocklin did three laps over 130 mph in the *Bucket List* with a 138 for the fastest. Since he had not driven since 2015, he needed to re-qualify as a driver. H1 told him that his three laps over 130 were enough, but he would still have to start on the outside for the first two heats. “That’s fine with me. I had no plans on starting in the inside anyway!” he said.

Kelly tested in the U-8, with a fastest lap of almost 155 mph. Afterwards his arm was back in the sling. “It’s OK, but it wasn’t fun. The driving is not the issue. The shoulder belt in my five-point harness comes right over the break in the collarbone and pushes on it. That’s the bad part.”

All six boats tested in the 1 p.m. test session. Stocklin did two laps at 132 in the *Bucket List*, but it slowed to a stop in turn two of lap three. Season-long gearbox problems struck again.

Brown drove the *Tri-Cities* in the session and his three laps over 150 re-qualified him as a driver. His fastest lap was over 155 mph. “I had some misgivings about this, but I wanted to help the team. Once the cockpit closed, I felt at home with no butterflies. The boat felt similar to what I remembered from 2014 when I drove it.

“It is a good boat. It is predictable, drivable, and manageable. I have been driving some limiteds, but the Unlimited is different. It is a new ball game. It is physical with a small margin for error. I hope JMK can go. He is better behind the wheel, and I’m better as his spotter.”

Peabody was looking forward to getting his second win. “Getting my first



Chris Denslow



Craig Fjarlie



Chris Denslow

TOP: Jimmy Shane drives *Miss HomeStreet* around the Mission Bay course on Friday.
MIDDLE: Kelly Stocklin prepares to take the U-440 *Bucket List Racing* for a test run.
ABOVE: The *Bucket List Racing* was doing fine until its gearbox was damaged.



Craig Fjarlie



Craig Barney



Chris Denslow

TOP: The U-40 *Miss Beacon Plumbing* floats beside the dock after a run on Mission Bay. **MIDDLE:** The U-11 *J&D's* is lifted from its trailer. **ABOVE:** *J&D's* co-owner Scott Raney (left) and Ken Knudsen help guide the engine as a crane lowers it into the boat.

win at our team's home course in Tri-Cities was great. I knew JMK had problems in the final so I just stayed wide and was patient until I could pass him.

"The first year for us has been like a storybook. We are breaking in a new aluminum motor here. Our other motor is magnesium, which doesn't do well with the salt. We have never used the new one and we are working on a minor hiccup. We just need some more testing time."

Villwock was pleased with the changes they made to *Beacon*. "We've worked on the wing, the rudder, the skid fin, and tuned the motors. Our speed is increasing. I think we can do somewhere in the 162 to 165 range in qualifying."

J&D's co-owner Scott Raney was not pleased with their test runs. "Underwhelming. We tried some new things, and the changes didn't work. I am disappointed. We'll go back to our Tri-Cities set up, but we have to change to get better."

Qualifying

The gearbox damage kept *Bucket List* out of the 3:30 p.m. qualifying session. However, since it did a lap of 130 mph in the testing session, it could receive a Commissioner's Option to be a qualified boat.

Beacon was the first boat on the water. Villwock's first lap was announced as 164.317, close to the course record of 164.759 for fuel-restricted hydros. After hearing his speed, Villwock backed off for the next two laps, doing 157.842 and 155.798.

Next out was *J&D's*; Nilsen did 152.142. *Pinnacle* was next; Peabody did 153.967. Kelly felt good enough to drive, and he did a 155.461. The last boat to qualify was *HomeStreet*. Shane did 163.342. Later, it was announced that all the boats had cleared the tech truck.

In the second round of qualifying, thinking they had a 164 mph qualifying speed, the *Beacon* team switched from their qualifying set up to their race set up and used the opportunity to test their set

up. Villwock did three laps in the 159s, with a fastest of 159.724. The only other boat to go out was *J&D's*. Nilsen increased his speed to 153.804.

After the qualifying session ended, H1 announced that Villwock's 164.317 speed had been changed to 161.016. There was no explanation why, nor was there an explanation of the source of the 161.016 speed. Shortly after, there was another H1 announcement. "First qualifying run for the U-40 was redacted due to an equipment malfunction." Again, there was no explanation.

The *Beacon* team and many fans were upset and confused. The boat passed the tech truck. How could there be an equipment malfunction? Later it was learned that the equipment malfunction was a problem with the H1 timing system. There was nothing wrong with the U-40.

More bad news followed for Stocklin's team. The broken gearbox would force the U-440 to withdraw. Stocklin would not be able to be a 70-year-old driver in competition. "Physically, I was fine. It was fun driving again and the boat did what I expected. I'm just disappointed about the gearbox."

Heats one and two

Heats one and two would be run on Saturday, with 1A not scheduled until 12:15 p.m. With only five boats, 1A would have three boats and 1B would have two boats. After the qualifying points, Shane gained 30 points on Kelly to trail by 180 points for the driver championship.

Heat 1A had *HomeStreet*, *Pinnacle*, and *Beacon*. Shane used the inside lane to take an early lead over Villwock and he was never challenged. Shane won by two roostertails over Villwock. Peabody trailed and had to run an extra lap due to his jumping the gun.

"The boat ran well," said Shane. "It was a clean heat. I need to draw the U-8 in my next heat, and I hope I can get some help from Jamie Nilsen in 1B."

Shane didn't get the help he wanted

STATBOX

HOMESTREET BANK BAYFAIR

San Diego, California, September 18-19, 2021
2 1/2-mile oval on Mission Bay; 35-mile race

QUALIFYING (1) U-1 *Miss HomeStreet* (#1801), Jimmy Shane, 163.342, 100 points; (2) U-40 *Miss Beacon Plumbing*, Dave Villwock, 161.016, 80; (3) U-8 *Miss Tri-Cities*, J. Michael Kelly, 155.461, 70; (4) U-9 *Pinnacle Peak Consulting*, Corey Peabody, 153.967, 60; (5) U-11 *J&D's*, Jamie Nilsen, 153.804, 50; U-440 *Bucket List Racing*, Kelly Stocklin, withdrew, damaged gearbox during testing, 0.

HEAT 1A (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 150.304, 400, 500; (2) *Miss Beacon Plumbing* 148.499, 300, 380; (3) *Pinnacle Peak Consulting* 103.347 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun), 225, 285. Fast lap (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 155.504.

HEAT 1B (1) *Miss Tri-Cities* 145.307, 400, 470; *J&D's* DNF – lost propeller shaft and blew engine, 0, 50. Fast lap (3) *Miss Tri-Cities* 146.241.

HEAT 2A (1) *Miss Tri-Cities* 144.182, 400, 870; (2) *Pinnacle Peak Consulting* 141.621, 300, 585; *J&D's* DNS – repairing damage, 0, 50. Fast lap (2) *Miss Tri-Cities* 147.550.

HEAT 2B (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 111.128 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun), 400, 900; (2) *Miss Beacon Plumbing* 78.214 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun, penalized one lap for encroachment prior to the start), 300, 680. Fast lap (2) *Miss HomeStreet* 152.542.

HEAT 3A (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 151.740, 400, 1300; (2) *Miss Tri-Cities* 149.551, 300, 1170; *Pinnacle Peak Consulting* DSQ – Safety Zone violation prior to the start, 0, 585. Fast lap (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 158.931.

HEAT 3B (1) *Miss Beacon Plumbing* 148.384, 400, 1080; *J&D's* DNS – engine died prior to the start, 0, 50. Fast lap (2) *Miss Beacon Plumbing* 150.315.

FINAL (1) *Miss Tri-Cities* 144.756, 400, 1570; (2) *Miss HomeStreet* 125.990 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun), 300, 1600; (3) *Pinnacle Peak Consulting* 112.603 (penalized one lap for jumping the gun), 225, 810; *Miss Beacon Plumbing* DSQ – did not maintain 80 mph prior to the start, 0, 1080. Fast lap (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 157.288.

COMPILED BY ALLEN STILES

in Heat 1B. *J&D's* was in lane one and led *Tri-Cities* into turn one at the start. Unfortunately, *J&D's* lost its short propeller shaft. Without the propeller, the engine overrevved and grenaded in a ball of fire, smoke, and shrapnel. Kelly went on to complete his three laps for the easy win. His match of Shane's win kept his driver championship lead at 180 points.

Shane also didn't get the draw he waited for the second heat. *Tri-Cities*,

Pinnacle, and *J&D's* were drawn for Heat 2A. *J&D's* had no hull damage, fortunately, but the crew was working hard to remove the old engine and get a new one installed for Sunday's racing. So, Heat 2A became a two-boat race between teammates Kelly and Peabody.

With Kelly needing a win to keep his 180-point lead over Shane, did anyone think that Kelly would not win? With Kelly in lane one and Peabody in lane

two, they ran side-by-side for one and a half laps. In the backstretch of lap two, *Pinnacle* got light and Peabody had to slow down. Kelly went on to win by two roostertails.

Heat 2B was a two-boat race with *HomeStreet* and *Beacon*. Villwock did some things to make this heat interesting. As the boats left the pits, he moved over close to *HomeStreet*. Later during the milling, he cut across from the backstretch to cut in front of *HomeStreet*. While it did not appear that *HomeStreet* got wet, it slowed to a stop near the entrance to turn one.

Shane took a while to get *HomeStreet* started again. As he did, Villwock went by to take lane one as the boats moved slowly down the backstretch. Both boats appeared to be early at the start, and they both did jump the gun. The heat now became a four-lap race.

Shane took a one-roostertail lead down the backstretch and extended it to two roostertails at the end of lap one. By the end of lap three, Shane led

by three roostertails. Shane did the fourth lap to easily win. Villwock had to run a fifth lap due to an encroachment penalty he received when he crossed the course and cut in front of Shane during the milling.

Shane's win clinched the national high-points championship for the *HomeStreet* team. Shane was pleased. "It's fantastic for Madison. We have now won it in 10 of the last 13 years. It is a championship for the team. In the heat, I tried to restart once and it didn't start. Then after about 20 seconds, I tried again. It started and then I just made sure that I stayed out of Dave's way."

Heat three and the final

With Kelly and Shane both winning their heats on Saturday, Kelly entered Sunday still with the 180-point lead. In the morning first session, *J&D's* tried to test. The boat couldn't get up on a plane due to a fuel-flow problem. "We have a fuel problem that we think we can fix for heat three. We'll find out," said Nilsen.

Shane finally got the draw he wanted for Heat 3A. It would have *HomeStreet*, *Tri-Cities*, and *Pinnacle*. During the milling, Kelly and Peabody stayed together doing circles in the turn-one area of the course. Shane was early to lane one, with Kelly in lane two, and Peabody in lane three. Unfortunately for Peabody, he cut a buoy too early in the milling and went through the Safety Zone. He received a disqualification and stayed outside and away from the other boats during the heat.

Shane and Kelly crossed the start line together. Shane led by half a roostertail down the backstretch and stretched his lead to one and a half roostertails at the end of lap one. Shane kept that lead to the end to win. His win over

Kelly reduced Kelly's lead by 100 points, which meant Kelly would have an 80-point lead going into the final.

Heat 3B turned into another one-boat race. Nilsen tried to get *J&D's* on a plane to join *Beacon* on the course. Close to the one-minute mark, *J&D's* got on a plane but died in the front stretch after entering the course. With no other boat, H1 still had Villwock do a legal start and complete three laps for the win. He did.



Craig Barney



Chris Denslow

TOP RIGHT: *Miss HomeStreet* driver Jimmy Shane gets encouragement from a crewmember as he prepares to race.
ABOVE: Running toward the start of the final heat at San Diego. From the left, Corey Peabody in *Pinnacle Peak Consulting*, Dave Villwock in *Miss Beacon Plumbing*, Jimmy Shane in *Miss HomeStreet*, and J. Michael Kelly in *Miss Tri-Cities*, who has grabbed the inside lane.

Both Kelly and Shane looked forward to the final. “I was where I wanted to be in 3A to get lane one,” said Shane. “Our boat is fast and running very well.

“I feel good,” said Kelly. “I am ready for the final. I will try something different.”

Kelly’s something different worked as he was early in the backstretch to get lane one. *HomeStreet* was in lane two, *Beacon* in lane three, and *Pinnacle* in lane four. *J&D’s* did not get off its trailer.

HomeStreet and *Pinnacle* were first across the start line and the start was under review. By the end of lap one, Shane had a two-roostertail lead over Villwock, who led Kelly by half a roostertail. Peabody trailed. By the end of lap three, Shane’s lead was four roostertails over Villwock, who led Kelly by a roostertail with *Pinnacle* in fourth. The field was in parade mode in lap four.

At the end of lap five, *HomeStreet* got a white flag. Shane and Peabody had jumped. Villwock got the checkered flag, as did Kelly. Peabody joined Shane in doing an extra lap. The unofficial results on the water were *Beacon*, *Tri-Cities*, *HomeStreet*, and *Pinnacle*. By finishing ahead of Shane, Kelly won his first driver championship. Villwock’s unofficial win would be his 68th, once again giving him more wins than his age of 67.

During the celebration in the *Beacon* pits, Villwock asked Stocklin to join him at their truck. In another disappointment for the team, Villwock told Stocklin that they didn’t pass the tech truck. In turn one, during the milling, *Beacon* dropped below 80 mph for 5.05 seconds—five-hundredths of a second too long. The penalty was a disqualification, which gave the Bill Muncey Cup to Kelly, second place to Shane, and third to Peabody.

Stocklin was disappointed, but he accepted the call. “The rule is the rule, and I trust the equipment to give the correct results.”

Villwock was also disappointed. “It happened in the upper turn before the



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Chris Denslow



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TOP: The race winner, U-8 *Miss Tri-Cities*.
MIDDLE: Corey Peabody and *Pinnacle Peak Consulting*.
ABOVE: PA announcer Kay Brewer interviews J. Michael Kelly.



Chris Denslow

Dave Villwock and the Miss Beacon Plumbing team came "this close" to winning the Bill Muncy Cup in San Diego.

start. We have a light that goes on if I am below 80 mph, but I was watching other boats and the course and I didn't see it. Maybe we need a hammer that hits me to alert me. In spite of this, I do feel good about all of our accomplishments this year."

Shane said, "I thought we were clean at the start. I know Corey was ahead of me. We accomplished our national high-points championship goal and we won the Gold Cup in Madison on the 50th anniversary of our 1971 win. We are happy with the season. I guarantee we will come back faster next year."

Kelly's driver championship was his first in 16 years of Unlimited racing. He was emotional about his two wins. "My collarbone didn't feel good in the final, he said.

"I knew I was good at the start because I wasn't going fast. It means a lot for my team to trust me and for the officials allowing me to drive. I like winning races, and I love this course. I have been fortunate to be driving for great people and good teams. Next year will be better for the sport, with more equipment and boats."

Let's hope there is a next year in San Diego. The Bayfair officials were disappointed in the show that H1 had on the

water. Of the seven heats of racing, only three had three or more boats. Two-boat heats are not a good show, especially when one of the boats breaks or doesn't start.

None of the heats would have been described as competitive racing. The Bayfair officials were questioning whether they got a good return on what H1 was charging. The good news for Bayfair was that attendance was good. The RV spots on Fiesta Island were full and there were even new spaces added. There were many RVs on Vacation Island, and the crowd watching from the shore was bigger than

in the past few years.

The important question is did the fans think they got a good show to justify their time and money spent? The answer to that will help the Bayfair officials decide what to do for next year.

H1 has much to do this winter to improve their race management, their communication with the owners and the fans, and their on-the-water product. They also need to do a lot to repair the San Diego damage. They already lost Detroit as a site because of the product quality, and they can't afford to lose San Diego for the same reason. ❖

NOTES & QUOTES

BY MAC CLOUSE

A King in the pits:

It would have been a big plus to have Jimmy King and the U-3 in the pits, but there *was* a King in the pits. Jimmy's son Bobby was there to replace J. Michael Kelly in the Y-41 *Shenanigans* 1-liter. "I'm 27 and have been driving for 16 years in the 2.5 stock, 350, and 5-liter classes. This is my first time in a 1-liter." When asked if we would see him in the U-3, he

said, "I would love to do some test laps in the U-3, but Ed Cooper is pretty picky about who he will let drive his boat. My goal is to move to the GP class and then to an Unlimited."

A visitor from the north:

Former driver Jean Theoret shared some thoughts about the sport. "They let me cross the border. I like to come here to see my friends and a race. We need to use the new technologies available for

the boats, the engines, and the timing. We are vintage. If we move forward, we could maybe get more sponsors and corporate involvement. It is nice to have the U-8 back. It is a fast boat.” When asked if he could have been Kelly’s back up driver, he smiled and said, “Been there, done that.”



Chris Denslow

Driving at 67:

When asked about challenges or differences associated with driving at 67 years old compared to his younger days, Dave Villwock said, “Now I have to wear glasses. Otherwise, it is the same. Working on the boat is a workout. Since I returned to working on a boat and driving, my blood pressure has gone down. Before each heat that I drive, I get to a quiet place, relax for a few minutes, and focus. It is the same thing I have done for many years.”

A conversation with Darrell Strong:

Darrell Strong talked about how he formed his two-boat team, his thoughts about the sport’s future, and his grade for his first year performance. “I have been in the insurance business for 36 years and I have watched the boats race for 54 years, mostly at Tri Cities. I decided to take a bigger step beyond being a boat sponsor.

“Greg O’Farrell called me and asked me if I wanted to buy his boat and equipment. I did some vetting and told him

no. I called Mike and Lori Jones about the U-9. They wanted their boat to go to a good home. They viewed their team as a family and wanted it to go to the same kind of environment, which is also what I want our team to be.

“We worked out a deal and I got Jeff Campbell to come with the boat. I hired Corey before I bought the Nine. It has been a great ride for him.

“Buying the Elstrom boat and hiring JMK was another big step. The Elstrom boat was in the Jones shop. Corey recruited JMK and I let JMK and his family use my place in Scottsdale while Angela was recovering there. These things are helping us to create the family environment.”

When asked about the future of the sport, Darrell said, “Next year will be better, with more boats and more races. It should be good racing and a good show. Water sports are very popular.

“What can H1 do to capitalize on this? H1 needs marketing people. They need to have something to show potential sponsors and sites. The HomeStreet model is a great model to follow. They know how to make a sponsorship work.

“We need national sponsors. We need to get Detroit back, and Detroit and Seattle both need anchor sponsors. It would also be great to have a series sponsor.

“H1 needs to be able to provide more help to the sites and the owners. I don’t see the sport going back to pistons. The owners have too much invested in



Craig Barney

turbines. I have never heard an argument for pistons from someone who has turbines. I have eight turbine engines. The key is maintaining them.

“I think there is a way for an owner to make money in this sport. Get good enough that sponsors want their name on your boat. This year, our sponsors have been all my money, but I hope that changes in the future. This year, I have been concentrating on the team. I plan to get more involved with H1 so we can make the changes for the future.”

When asked what grade he would give his team this year, Darrell said, “Our team will get better each year, but for this year we get a B. That is not bad for a first year. We will work to get an A.”

After the final heat, where JMK won the driver championship and JMK and the Tri-Cities won the Bill Muncey Cup, Darrell said, “Please increase our grade to a B+!” ❖



Chris Denslow

The two boats campaigned by Vanessa and Darrell Strong: the U-9 and the U-8

FROM THE UNJ VAULT:

Remembering James G. Thompson

PART TWO

In last month's issue of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*, we brought you an item from the UNJ vault—an interview of James G. Thompson in recognition of his passing at age 94 on May 13. Thompson was the owner of the *Miss Supertest* racing team out of Canada, an organization that won the last three Harmsworth Trophy races for unlimited hydroplanes. Last month, Thompson discussed how he and his father, the co-founder of Supertest Petroleum, got into the sport in 1951, their use of the Rolls-Royce Griffon engine, and the campaigning of *Miss Supertest II*. The story continues with the introduction of a new boat to the team in 1959. The interview was conducted in June 1980 by Bill Osborne and Craig Fjarlie as they met with Thompson at the yacht club in Sarnia, Ontario. The interview first appeared in the *Unlimited NewsJournal* in February and March 1981.

UNJ: In 1959 the *Miss Supertest III* came out. Will you tell us a little about designing it, initial tests, and any advisors you had? Did Les Staudacher give any advice, or was it strictly your own operation?

Thompson: No, Les wasn't involved in that one at all. We built it in our own shop in London.

A rumor we had heard indicated parts were cut out in Kawkawlin and then assembled at your shop.

No. Not with *Miss Supertest III*. She was completely built in London.

You designed it, cut out the parts, put it together?

Designed it, lofted it, did the whole thing. Let's fact it, they're relatively easy to build. No difficult parts in them. But our own people built it. One of the young chaps from the company. We borrowed

another young chap from another company. Two, I guess, from another company. They were in the woodworking type of business. Supervised it. In fitting the boat out itself, then Bob Hayward was involved to a tremendous extent. Again, back to Bruce Wells, and so on. We had all our machinery. All that stuff was worked out by then.

As you drew the design, were there any changes you had in mind?

Well, there were a lot of... Just about every line on it was a little different.

What were you looking for? A boat that turned better? A boat that handled better?

A boat that handled better. Speed's no problem. The handling's the thing. You could see that at races. I think a good example of that, you being Seattleites,

were *Slo-mo-shun IV* and *Slo-mo-shun V*.

How do you recall the first launching of the boat? Did it run well right out of the box?

She ran awfully well! I'm having fun right now. This is really an aside, but a chap in London, *Miss Supertest* is just everything as far as he's concerned. I scaled the plans down for him to fit into a model. He was able to bore a propeller pretty close. I'm amazed how well it runs.

In 1959, you only ran *Miss Supertest III*. The *Two* did not appear at all. Was it too much to run both boats?

Well, certainly our long-range objective always had been the Harmsworth. The Harmsworth was in August. The Detroit Memorial was what, the end of June? So, there wouldn't be enough time. Why, you know, fiddling back and forth.



Sandy Ross Collection

Another area you'd be taking a chance on.

Was the Detroit Memorial sort of a shake-down for the *Three*? Seeing what you had?

Oh, yeah, sure. We figured we had to be in at least one race before the Harmsworth.

Did you feel the *Three* was as fast as all the other boats in that race? *Miss Bardahl* ran very well that day.

Well, obviously, she was fully competitive because she won it. The speeds were reasonable, and all the rest of it.

In the final heat, all the boats except the *Bardahl* jumped the gun. Jack Regas didn't realize he was legal, went charging when he didn't have to and broke down.

That's another one of those old saws. If you're going to win, you gotta finish!

Getting into the 1959 Harmsworth, what kind of preparations did you make? How did you set the boat up? Were you convinced you could win?

Well, as I say, it's something we were always serious about. If we'd felt we couldn't do it, we wouldn't have challenged for it. As far as setting the boat up, of course, we knew what course we were running on and everything. We set her up in the way that we figured we could get around the course in the shortest amount of time.

After the Detroit Memorial, did you feel that you had a small amount of preparation to do, small changes, or were...?

No major changes. In the boat, we did make one small change. Very slight. But I can't remember whether it was before the Harmsworth or after the Harmsworth.

Do you remember what the change was?

Just a very slight change in the angle of attack in the sponsons. A quarter of a degree or something. It was very, very slight. It was the only thing we ever did to the boat.

Did you test much between the Detroit Memorial and the Harmsworth?

I'd say a reasonable amount. Just to be sure of the handling. That's a big part again in the race. Boats that handle well and maybe don't go so fast... I think probably, to go back to him again, Foster in *Tempo VII* had that boat so he could do anything in it. He set quite a record with it, but speed was not his criterion, it was handling.

Bob Hayward drives *Miss Supertest III* during the 1959 Harmsworth Trophy race on the Detroit River.

"Let's fact it, they're relatively easy to build. No difficult parts in them. But our own people built it. One of the young chaps from the company. We borrowed another young chap from another company. Two, I guess, from another company."



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

James G. Thompson before a test drive.



The CA-3 *Miss Supertest III* in 1959.

Did you have any freedom to change the engines to any extent you wanted?

Oh, yeah.

Much different than the Wilson's?

Well, they were our engines, Griffon 65s, which is a completely different engine what Wilson ran.

From the early point on, once you had your engines, you never had to go through what he went through, is that correct? Did you ever have one on loan?

We had one in *Supertest II*, and that was in '56.

Which engine was that?

The Griffon 57. Same model that Wilson had.

Then, with that one, you were pretty much restricted in what you could do?

Well, Rolls-Royce was pretty good to us.

Did they send people?

Yeah, they had a technical rep out of Toronto who we used to spend a lot of time with. Also, their service manager from Montreal spent quite a bit—well, not as much time. But they were great people and a great help, there's no question. We used to have problems and they'd go at 'em over in Scotland.

Did they tell you, only take it up to a certain number of rpms? Were you restricted in that?

Yeah, they didn't want us blowing 'em up, let's put it that way. But, as far

as horsepower is concerned, they had it. Even with our own engines, we used to limit ourselves, because there weren't enough available to be able to go out and just blow two or three or a half dozen up just to find out how far you could go, you know.

What was your limitation point with rpm?

About 3,200. That's where we worked at. As far as horsepower goes, there was more than you could use.

Were there any other Canadian people who had Harmsworth experience from Wilson's crews helping you at this time?

No, none.

We've heard you had some help from Charley Volker.

Right, early on. Charley knew the old *Miss Canadas*. Let's face it, we didn't know anything about race boats at that stage. Charley was the fellow who got us started, for sure. Great help. And Charley, too, was really an amazing fellow, a combination you didn't see too often. A damn-good engineer and a first-class machinist, too. He could think of something and then go over to the machinery. Next thing you knew, you had the part. Bruce Wells actually was very similar in that sense, although he didn't have the formal training that Charley had.

What do you recall of the 1959 Harmsworth race itself? You won the first heat, *Maverick* won the second, and then you won the final.

Well, *Maverick* was a real going machine, there's no question about it. That was a tough, tough race. Of the three Harmsworths, that was the toughest one. *Maverick*, in other races at that time, was running awfully well.

They won the Gold Cup and national championship that year.

Sure, just a real going machine.

After that win, was there any thought to possibly going out to Seattle again? Taking the *Three* out there?

No, no. That was our Harmsworth



The CA-1 *Miss Supertest II* in Detroit in 1960.

boat, and we didn't deviate from that one. Mind you, I'd love to have taken her out. She was running awfully well!

In 1960, you did run the *Three* again. Finished second in the Detroit Memorial with it. Now, you were in a position where you were running two boats. How much extra work did that require and how were they maintained?

Well, the interesting thing here is, from the standpoint of machinery, engines, that sort of thing, they were the same, because we only had the one gearbox. So, we'd take the engine from one boat and fit it in the other. The only thing we didn't move, I guess, was the propeller shaft, because they were different lengths. Oil tank, fuel tank, and that stuff stayed. But the engine and its running gear went back and forth between the two boats. So, actually the mechanical setup was identical in the two boats—or as close as you can get 'em.

Then you won the Harmsworth again. This was up at Picton. Three U.S. boats came up—both *Nitrogens* and *Gale V*. How did the big five-mile course come about?

The old Harmsworth deed of gift was you had to run a minimum of, I think, 35 nautical miles. And, the course was originally between five and seven nautical miles. Obviously, in Detroit the three statute miles was a concession to the location. Nobody wanted to see anybody driving under the bridge. To go farther north, you're out into the lake and just no case of controlling the course. But down at Picton there's no problem that way, so we went back to the five-mile course that year. Now, the following year it was three miles.

This time the *Supertest III* was noticeably superior to the others.

Yeah, which I think tends to point up how good a boat *Maverick* was. She was tough, and with the setup and the machinery they had, the separate supercharger, she was pretty darn reliable for what she did during the year.

Late that year you took the *Two* out to Lake Mead for the Gold Cup.

I think we won the first heat, if I'm not mistaken.

You were on top in Heat 1B, until *Gale V* flipped.

Then they stopped it, yeah. I remember it was so rough. Then they finally canceled the race because of the time period they had. The weather didn't quiet down.

"Well, *Maverick* was a real going machine, there's no question about it. That was a tough, tough race. Of the three Harmsworths, that was the toughest one. *Maverick*, in other races at that time, was running awfully well."

Do you recall anything about the discussion, the politics, concerning that cancellation?

I don't remember that. I remember, certainly, as far as we were concerned, being disappointed that the race was canceled. Again, it would appear we were running well there.

Plus, you'd come a long way from home.

Come a long way. A little like having the rug pulled out, you know. But these things happen and you can't worry about them.

We have heard that at the 1960 Gold Cup, Bill Muncey saw the *Supertest II* and made the remark, "They can run 100 miles an hour on the starter."

[Laughter] I didn't hear that one! Oh, she was fast. She'd move.

Moving on to 1961, you were second in the Detroit Memorial with *Miss Supertest II*. You had a tough duel with *Gale V* in the final.

Cantrell always gave you a good race. Bill was a damn-good driver.

You skipped the Gold Cup.

That would be for the Harmsworth.

In the 1961 Harmsworth you raced against Chuck Thompson in *Miss Detroit*. That was a rather easy victory for you, compared to the other two, right?

Oh, it would have to be, yeah.

Why did they go to the three-mile course?

Well, that again was a concession. I knew the boat well enough by that time. I didn't care what we ran.

Did you have a preference? Would you have rather run the five or the three?

Oh, I don't think it really mattered. The thing about the five is there's not as much turning involved as there is in the three.

Now, on the five-mile course, how was it different? Was it just strictly longer straightaways, or were the turns wider as well?

Just longer straightaways. There was a sort of standard radius turn they used. Oh, you could get going if you wanted to, but the trick was not to get carried away, either. Get yourself into a position, if you can, ahead, where you can keep an eye on the other fellow. You're far better to be there and not beating the hell out of the boat unless you have to. But at least be in a position where you know for sure exactly what he's doing and where he is.

I guess we have to bring up the 1961 Silver

“We’d won the Harmsworth and defended it twice successfully. So, we rather felt we’d proved the point that we set to prove in the first place, that we could do it.”

Bob Hayward drives the CA-3 *Miss Supertest III* to victory at the 1961 Harmsworth in Picton, Ontario. The Harmsworth, first held in 1903, would be contested among Unlimited-class hydroplanes for the last time that year.

Cup [where Bob Hayward was killed].

Humm.

That was the end of your involvement. What do you care to say about that Silver Cup and what happened?

Well, I don’t know that there’s too much to say. You never know what’s going on in a person’s mind, you know. But Bob was certainly first into that corner, well ahead. I think there were two boats behind him. But he was going awfully fast.

He didn’t finish the first heat, or didn’t start, or something. He felt he had to win to get in the final?

I don’t think it was a matter of not finishing the heat. But there was something that put him back. Could have been that he touched a buoy, up at the small end, which meant another lap.

Had the accident not happened, were you still interested in continuing?

Well, we’d really done what we’d set out to do. If we had continued, it wouldn’t have been for very much longer.

You wouldn’t have built another boat?

I doubt it. Yeah, I doubt it. We’d won the Harmsworth and defended it twice successfully. So, we rather felt we’d proved the point that we set to prove in the first place, that we could do it.

Now, there was a rumor that, had the accident not happened, you were thinking of taking the *Three* out to Seattle for the ‘62 Gold Cup.



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Bob Hayward

I really don’t recall that one. Might have been mentioned, but there was no serious thought of it, I’m sure. You know, I think if we had done that, we might have built another boat for that purpose, because *Three* was our Harmsworth boat, which I’d have made a little different again. Not much, but a little bit different.

By this time, were the *Two* and *Three* showing signs of age? Or, was the *Three* still in good shape?

Oh, the *Three* was in excellent shape. The *Two* was certainly starting to show a bit of age, but still in good shape. But, other than the first



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Harmsworth, the *Three* was never really pushed.

Tell us a little about the philosophy of your crews. Were they volunteers? Were they paid? Who was in charge? Did you have a crew chief?

Well, we had a mixture. Bob Hayward was working full time on the boat. Vic Leghorn was our crew chief. This was primarily at a race. Away from a race, then the decisions basically came back to me, as to are we going to do it? Or, what are we going to do?

So, normally for test work, we'd have Bob Hayward, there was Vic, I'd usually be there, and we had one other chap who wasn't doing it professionally but was closely associated and sort of helped with the handling and that. Then Bruce Wells, whom I've mentioned, with his own shop. That was done on an amateur basis, but he just loved it. He was there all the time. That usually was our crew for testing and working things out.

When we went to the races, a fellow from Hamilton would come down. He'd crewed for Bill Braden for years in the small boats. He just loved it. At a race he was just great. I'm trying to think, there was somebody else. A couple of people didn't go to all of the races, but they'd give us a hand.

You know, sometimes you gotta move quickly. In Detroit, we'd have a breakdown and might have to go back to London to get a part, come back in the middle of the night and rebuild an engine. This sort of thing. We didn't run a big crew. Finally, we got smart enough to realize either we're ready or we're not. If you have a ma-



Bob Hayward was killed driving *Miss Supertest II* at the 1961 Silver Cup in Detroit.

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

major breakdown, depending on where you are, there's only so much you can do about it at the time.

In your earlier years, when Stan Sayres came back here with the *Slo-mo IV*, did you get along with him pretty well?

The only one I got to know was [Ted] Jones, and that was a little later. They would pit away from everyone else in those days. You'd see the boat out on the racecourse running around. But I never really did get to know Mr. Sayres. I think I just met him a couple of times and that was about it.

Did you ever confer with him or Jones when you were going to go for the mile trials?

No, our problems were with a completely different engine. When you stop and think about it, the ways to set their boats up, and so on, well, that's for that style of engine. Of course, there wasn't too much difference in the way the Allison and the Merlin set up. You came into the Griffon, you're into a completely different rpm range in your power and so on. We didn't have the ability to overspeed. We had a much

greater difference between the Allison and the Merlin, so we had to do a lot of our own finding out.

What was your procedure on engines-tearing down, rebuilding, looking at them? Did you have a timetable? Say we've run this engine a certain number of minutes at hard rpms, we should tear it down, or was there?

We weren't stretching them like the Merlins. Those rpms, to me are just wild. We were never stretching that hard. Nor were we running high boost at high rpm. But we would take the engines down basically during the winter, the ones that we'd run, and have a look at them, check them over. Usually, everything would look all right, put 'em back together again. But we didn't do a lot.

The basic part of the engine—there's so much that was built right into the engine that made so much sense. As long as you stopped and looked at it and said to yourself, "Why did they do it that way?" Usually there was a good reason for it and you'd leave well enough alone.

Like, for instance, our gearbox. We copied, we actually copied everything as close as we could to the form of the Rolls-Royce gearing. Again, "Why did they do it that way?" We couldn't figure out any reason to do otherwise. Figured they were sufficient in the size of the gears, the gear-teeth faces, to take the power, which is why they'd done it that way.

So, we copied within reason. We're talking about a little different gear-tooth form. Theirs wasn't available to us. Things like that. We found that very helpful.

You always turned the carburetor right side up...

Oh, yeah, that was a safety feature more than anything. And, if you had to work on it, it was a little easier to get at. Sure, we made all those changes. Oh, we tried different carburetors on different engines, different styles of carburetors, different manufacturers, different makes. They're probably still trying the same things, too!

Getting back to your gearbox, what was your gear ratio?

3.65 to 1. It took us a while to work out gearboxes. When we started, gearboxes were our first problem. We got over that one, and we ran the same gearbox in *Miss Supertest II* and *III*. In fact, the same set of gears.

Did you carry spare gears?

Well, we had different gear ratios. But we did have one spare set of gears of our favorite, which was that 3.65 to 1. It seemed to be the best for just about anything. Now, we may have run a little higher gear ratio for the mile trial. I forget. I think we did.

Do you remember much about props, pitches?

They were pretty close to what everybody else ran. Around 13 to 13½ inches in diameter, and 18 to 20 inches of pitch. You know, an individual propeller, you'd have two of the same size and one worked better than the other. Or, you thought they were the same. So, you get your favorites and you try to copy your favorites. Then good luck! But that's... When you get your favorites, you keep a pretty darn close eye on them, because

they were subject to fatigue.

How did you obtain your propellers?

Well, over the years, we sort of learned. Actually, we ended up making our own. Kind of difficult. I don't know why it should be, but it was awfully hard to try to duplicate a propeller. You could come close. It's still very much of an art. I don't know what the little tricks are nowadays [1980].

Today, before every race, they magnaflux them, and do all this stuff.

Well, we used to do that every night. Die check, basically. We didn't do too much of the magnafluxing. A lot of die checking in those days. The other thing was just straight eyeball 'em. Found out where to look for the cracks. We broke a couple of propellers over the years. They kind of make a mess!

How much spare equipment would you have built up? Did you take it all with you?

Well, we didn't have, with the Grifons, a tremendous grab bag. But we used to carry a spare engine. We had a little truck set up, we'd have one spare engine in there. It would be complete with

everything except the gearbox. So, we couldn't do a half hour engine change.

On the *Supertest III*, did you change the colors or paint on it during the three years? First you had the flag on the tail...

Not that I recall. Put the Maple Leaf on it, then went back to the flag.

Was your decision to get out of racing a result of the accident?

Primarily, no. I think it just...

It was time to get out?

It was time to get out anyway, or very close to it. It might have hurried it just a little bit, but not very much.

What became of your equipment? Now, *Supertest III* was in a museum?

It still is, down in Toronto. My wife and I were up in Ottawa last weekend and dropped in there on the way back. I hadn't seen the boat for a few years. Still looks pretty good.

And what became of the *Two*?

We had a lack of space, so we broke it up, eventually.

Burn it?

No, no, we just took it apart.

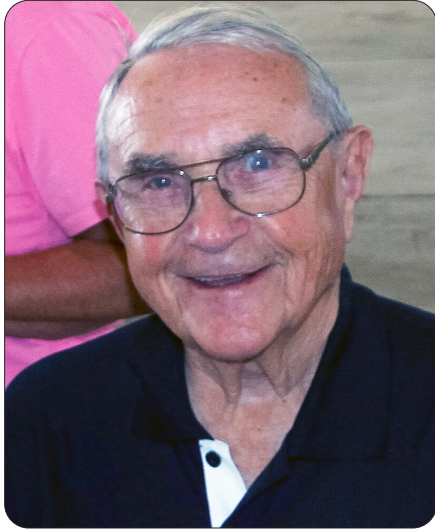
Do you still have the pieces?

No, unfortunately, about five years ago we had a fire in the building they



Robert F. Peters

Plans for a Canadian Raceboat Hall of Fame in Muskoka, Ontario, include having the *Miss Supertest III* as its featured attraction.



Robert F. Peters

James Thompson

were stored in. We lost engines, our gearbox, things like that.

So, you did keep the Griffons you had?

Yeah, well, we didn't have that many. Altogether, we had about a dozen of the Griffon 6s, which certainly doesn't have the strength and the layout of the Griffon 65s and 74s. We only had about four or five in total of the 65s and 74s. So, that was not a big stock.

And that was all lost, as well?

Yeah, unfortunately lost it all. The whole thing.

Now the Misteles in Detroit restored the *Miss Canada IV* and someone else has the *Canada III*. Did they get them from you, or had you disposed of them earlier?

No, Misteles found it somewhere south of here. Apparently he found it in a field. Now, I forget. I think we sold *Miss Canada III* to... Was it Mascari? He was kind of interested. I think it was Joe we sold it to. Of course, we never ran her. But that was the one I liked of the *Miss Canadas*. She was a beautiful running boat.

You never put it in the water?

No. Oh, she was too small for the traffic. She was only, what, 24 feet? That Merlin Wilson had in there was an awful lot of engine for that boat. Actually, we had the old Miller, and lost that in the

fire. The original Miller engine. That was quite a thing. That was Indianapolis, you know, only much bigger. But that's exactly what it was.

Did you go to a lot of races, even if you didn't bring a boat?

Not too many. But during that period, we went to some. Usually, we were so busy because there's only so much time between races.

After you retired from racing, were you around it much, or did you stay away? Did you attend any races?

Not too much. No, just too busy, really. I've always sort of followed it from a distance.

Do you still communicate with some of the people?

Ah, not too often, really. Of course, nowadays, I'm getting to be an antique. Well, I guess everybody who gets into the game... You don't keep going ahead like a row of bricks. Everybody starts back at the first brick.

How did you feel? Were you accepted by the other racers, or did they treat you like an outsider because you were from Canada and challenging for the Harmsworth?

Well, from that standpoint, sure, you're a bit of an outsider, but we enjoyed it thoroughly. They were a good bunch, and of course when we started it was strictly an amateur deal back in those days. That was a lot of fun. Lot of nice guys, competitive, helpful of one another, and all that.

It was changing by the time you were getting out.

Oh, yeah, it was starting to get quite professionalized.

That's the way it is now.

Well, you have to think, your Internal Revenue Service is responsible for that. Or, largely responsible.

Did you approve of the changes, or did they bother you?

Well, I'll speak as an outsider, it's none of my damn business. But, no, quite frankly, the more amateur approach, I think, really was the more fun. It was still

fun the other way. Fortunately, it was the same group of people going through.

You saw races that were basically endurance, like the Harmsworths and Gold Cups, and there were other races that were shorter, five laps on a smaller course. Did you have a preference? Did it make a difference for how to set up your boat?

Well, basically, the course size would make the difference for how you'd set up. Again, it's how short a time. Whether you do it once or you do it 10 times, what's the difference?

Just the fuel load.

It always used to amaze me. The *Slo-mo IV* had the tanks right in the transom. I don't know about the drivers, how much they noticed the difference, but boy, from the shore you couldn't tell whether he was running full tanks or empty tanks. Just seemed to make no difference at all. You talk about balance, that was one of the things that always amazed me.

What would you say were the secrets to your success? Props, engines, hull? Did you have anything that you concentrated on?

That's an interesting question. Obviously, we must've had a good hull. We certainly had a good crew. We certainly had good engines. The machinery we were involved in was good. It didn't break up on us. We had—must've ended up with good propellers.

Did you basically run the show, then? You were the boss of the team?

Basically, yeah. Certainly, as far as the boat itself was concerned and what we were going to do and how we were going to do it, that was fully mine. As far as what races, that was more of a joint decision. ❖

HERITAGE

Historical Perspective by Craig Fjarlie



For much of the 2021 season, I heard a variety of comments from people who raised questions about the status of Unlimited racing. The questions were often in the form of criticism because people thought something was amiss from the way they remembered the sport in 2019.

The first thing I noticed at Guntersterville was that almost every team seemed out of practice. The lack of racing in 2020 meant crews had to find their groove again. Working together for a common goal requires practice. That's true in all team sports as well as military units, musical groups, theatre productions, and sometimes even in politics.

Race crews appeared to have their unity in good order by the time the circuit moved to Madison, but race sites had new personnel in some positions and problems with course conditions were beyond anyone's immediate control. In addition, the Covid pandemic left the status of some races unclear until nearly the last minute.

Looking back, there are similarities with 2021 and the years immediately following World War II. The 1946 season was a rebuilding year, and it continued into the following season. One positive development was the sudden availability of surplus aircraft engines that gave Unlimited racing its signature sound and power source for more than 35 years.

There seems to be something akin to romanticism about Unlimited racing's "Golden Era." In truth, the Golden Era was spotty and hardly perfect. Sure, Gold Cup races usually drew a large entry list. Other races sometimes had just a few boats.

Granted, in the days before the Interstate Highway System was completed, traveling across country towing a boat was no easy task. Only four boats,

all from Detroit, started the 1951 Maple Leaf Trophy Race at Windsor, Ontario. The 1953 Detroit Memorial also had four entries. The 1956 race at Lake Tahoe was another four-boat affair.

The 1957 Apple Cup on Lake Chelan drew nine entries, but two failed to qualify, leaving seven boats to vie for the trophy. The 1958 International Boundary Race in St. Clair, Michigan, had four entries. The following year, the St. Clair regatta had five entries.

The 1961 Detroit Memorial had seven entries, but two of the boats were unable to finish a single heat. Ten years later, the Unlimiteds had their first race in Miami. Again, there were seven entries but only five boats finished.

In 1974, a race in Jacksonville, Florida, closed out the season. It drew seven boats. There were eight boats at the 1978 Miami race, but *Atlas Van Lines* was the only one that finished the final heat. The Gold Cup was in Owensboro, Kentucky, that year, and 10 boats entered; however, four were unable to qualify. The remaining six boats ran in each heat; there was no draw for sections. The 1979 season opened at Miami with six boats participating.

Small fields were becoming the norm at a number of races in the early 1980s. World War II aircraft engines were being pushed to their limit. Although the quill-shaft problem that plagued boats in the 1950s had been solved, blown engines were the new concern. Engines were more difficult to acquire and they were costly. Some pundits were heard to say that Unlimited racing needed a war so there would be a new inventory of surplus engines. The Vietnam War was over and before long, turbine helicopter engines would replace piston power.

In 1980, seven boats started at Detroit and seven qualified for the Gold

Cup in Madison.

At Madison, one boat was withdrawn before the first heat, so the remaining six boats ran together in the preliminary heats.

There were seven boats at the 1982 season-opener at Miami, but only five started. A new race at Seneca Lake near Romulus, New York, had five entries. The 1983 season began at Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. It drew seven boats. The event in Romulus had six.

In 1997 the season began at Firebird Lake near Phoenix. Only four boats entered that race, which was conducted on a course that was totally inappropriate for Unlimiteds.

The new century has had numerous races with small entry lists. The 2004 Evansville race had only four boats; Madison had seven. Low boat counts continued in the second decade. The 2017 Madison Regatta had four boats that ran in a series of match races until the final, when all four took to the Ohio River. The Gold Cup in Detroit had just six boats.

The Unlimiteds returned to Guntersterville in 2018. The regatta had seven entries but only six qualified. Another boat was withdrawn following the first section of preliminary heats, so the remaining preliminaries had three boats in the A section and two in the B section.

Five boats entered the Madison Regatta; six boats participated in the Gold Cup at Detroit and in the season finale at San Diego. In 2019 San Diego again had six boats in keeping with a request from the race committee. A round-robin format was used so each preliminary heat had four starters, as opposed to two or three starters, which is more apt to occur when a draw format is employed, as in 2021.

Taking a long view of racing history since 1946, it becomes apparent that there has been wide fluctuation in the number of boats that participated in most regattas. A full field has been assumed to feature between 10 and 12 boats. A turnout of 16 or 18 boats has been relatively rare.

In that respect, a race with four or five boats really is no more of an anomaly than is a pit area crowded with 18 boats.

Of course, it would be wonderful to have a large turnout at all the races next year, but the historical facts suggest that wish borders on pie in the sky. Yes, the 2021 San Diego race left a lot to be de-

sired, but if the season that just ended really was a rebuilding year following the damage caused by the Covid pandemic, then H1 leadership and participants can—and should—collectively take another step up the ladder and strive to make 2022 a better show. I'm going to trust that will happen. ❖

\$ENIOR \$AYS

Feeding Your Hydro Habit by Bob Senior



A guide to help hydro fans spend their hobby money.

THE NEXT HYDROPLANE MUSEUM ON-LINE AUCTION IS FROM NOVEMBER 1st THRU 7th:

This is the museum's most important fundraiser of the year. The online auction will include the likes of hydro models, hydro games, hydro boat buttons, vintage Seafair pins, team uniforms, autographed photos, a custom-made hydro theme guitar, and a ride in the newly restored replica of the U-7 *Notre Dame*. Be sure to visit <https://thunderboats.maestroweb.com/> and support a good cause.

HYDROPLANE MUSEUM ONLINE

STORE: Here is your chance to shop for gifts for those special hydro fans on your Christmas list. Visit www.thunderboats.ning.com then click on the "SHOP" button. You'll find racing videos, books, hydro apparel, and much more.

SPEAKING OF THE MUSEUM:

Membership dollars are the lifeblood of any non-profit organization. You can support the museum via the same web address and click on the "Join the Museum" button. Special hydro-shaped thumb drives, loaded with appropriate racing videos, and now offered as membership premiums.

"CZAR" THE LEE SCHOENITH STORY

by Doug Ford. Arguably, the sport of Unlimited hydroplane racing may not have survived without the contributions

of J. Lee Schoenith. This book tells you all about the Gale Enterprises racing achievements, from the *Gale* boats to *Smirnoff* and the *Atlas Van Lines* hydros. And it outlines Lee's accomplishments as URC chairman. Available at the museum store.

"WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?"

by Doug Ford. There are 26 articulate stories about unique and innovative Unlimited hydroplanes that failed. From *Gale III* to *Miss Skyway* to *Miss University District*, to *The Dutchman*, the *Aronow Unlimited*, *Arcadian* with eight outboard engines, to the *Winston Eagle* lobster boat. This interesting and informative book is well illustrated and is also available via the museum store.

"A CHRONOLOGY OF THE HARMSWORTH RACES" FOR THE YEARS 1903 TO 1961

by Tim Matyn. The British International Trophy, donated by Alfred Lord Harmsworth, was a motorboat race between nations. This book tells you about all of the early 20th century European races, the dominant years of Gar Wood and his *Miss Americas*, and the post-war victories of *Slo-mo-shun IV*, *Shanty I*, and *Miss Supertest III*. The book is available at Amazon or from the author is email timmatyn@att.net.

SEFAIR COMMEMORATIVE HYDROPLANE PHOTO BUTTONS: This series be-

gan in 1973. Each button helps recall the famous hydros of the past: the *Slo-mos*, *Shanty I*, *Maverick*, *Thriftway*, *Bardahl*, *Miss U.S.*, *Miss Madison* and other popular favorites. More information is available from Steve Levy at stevenl20@aol.com.

"HYDROPLANES OF FAME" SET OF TEN COLOR POSTCARDS: Standard postcard size, 4 inches by 6 inches. Photos by Ron Suttell. Boat history on the back. Set includes *Oberto*, *Graham Trucking*, *Ellstrom*, *Miss HomeStreet*, *Les Schwab Tires*, and five museum vintage hydroplanes: \$14.99 postage-paid. Pay c/o PayPal at hydroplanesoffame@yahoo.com.

AND MAY I TOOT MY OWN HORN?

Every two weeks I send out an illustrated email memorabilia auction. I pay all postage. Boat buttons, regatta buttons, hat pins (tacks), and race programs. If you would like to receive it, please send your personal email address to me at bob.senior37@hotmail.com. You'll be glad you did!

Okay, that's all for this time. See you in February. ❖

HYDROFILE

Race Team News by Lon Erickson



With all the teams now returned home from San Diego, they look to wash-downs, desalination, vinyl removal, and stripping of hardware from the hulls. As soon as that's done, the boats go back into the race shops for hull maintenance, repairs, and modifications looking for speed and better handling in 2022.

U-3 Go3 Racing

Ed Cooper's "Turbinator" will see some hull repairs from damage incurred at the Tri-Cities HAPO Columbia Cup. In the photo below, the "Turbinator" is outside the race shop on a sunny day in Posey County, Indiana. Bottom: An Allison V-12 engine bank.



Photos from Go3 Racing

U-8/U-9 Strong Racing

After their first season of competing on the H1 circuit, the Strong Racing team will review their results and the approach for the winter months, looking to improve on their inaugural season. Below: The U-9 after being stripped of vinyl graphics, hardware, access hatches, and ready for washing. Middle: The U-8 *Miss Tri-Cities* and U-9 *Pinnacle Peak Consulting* hulls parked inside the Kent, Washington, race shop. Bottom: Jeff Campbell and Corey Peabody discuss plans for off-season work on the U-9.



Photos from Strong Racing

U-11 Unlimited Racing Group

The U-11 Unlimited Racing Group's J&D's hull has been prepped for winter at the race shop in Cle Elum, Washington. The *J&D's* has been fully washed and put back in the shop for its winter work. After running in salt water, the boat has been fully washed, deck hatches come off, and every compartment received a deep cleaning. Right: Owner Scott Raney continues work on the U-11 *J&D's* motor that over sped after the prop shaft broke in San Diego. All the components need to be taken off the motor to see what can be salvaged.



H1 Unlimited wants to hear from you.

If you are a fan of unlimited hydroplane racing, even if you're new to the sport, H1 Unlimited would like to know what you think. Perhaps with the 2021 season now ended, you've maybe looked back at what happened this year and have some ideas for the future?

That's why H1 Unlimited wants to hear from you.

By clicking on the link below, you will be taken to a brief survey that will provide H1 Unlimited with valuable feedback about our sport and the fans. You'll be asked questions about how long you've been a fan, what appeals to you about the

sport, and how you follow the action. The survey also asks questions that will help us know you better. What's more, if you choose, you also can enter a drawing to win an Amazon gift card.

Please take a few minutes to tell H1 what you think about unlimited hydroplane racing. Your opinion is important.

To take the survey, simply go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/h1fansurvey>

Comments from our readers.

Hi Andy, I really enjoy the *Unlimited NewsJournal*. Great work by you and your staff. I am writing about your latest editorial on the state of the sport [August issue]. Being a long-time student (65 years) of the sport of Unlimited hydroplane racing, I've always tried not to compare the old days with the present condition of the sport, for the simple reason that people are different now. Back in 1946, spectators were absolutely thrilled to see even one boat running. "Man, that Guy Lombardo really tore up the racecourse!" A two-boat race was even more thrilling. Today, as you well know, attention spans are a little shorter, and a modern audience demands action. I've observed reactions when only one or two boats answer the starter's gun today. They go back to talking among themselves. I'm not here to offer any solutions, just an observation that people were more enthused in the old days,

compared to today's jaded, overindulged masses.

Thank you, Steve Garey

Hello Andy, I just read your article about Bill Muncey in the UNJ and was deeply moved. This is the first time I really connected to the details of his life, his death, and his memorial in San Diego, where I've attended almost every race since 1985. Your own connection with his Wil, and your encounters with Wil's dad, brought life to the story in a very meaningful way. Thanks for sharing it.

Sincerely, Jared Kliger

I would like to thank the staff and all of the people who wrote articles this year I look forward to receiving the *Unlimited NewsJournal* every month to read the article from the past and present. You guys rock.

William Nordyke

HRL and GPA to collaborate

Directors from the Hydroplane Racing League (HRL) and Grand Prix America (GPA) have engaged in talks to release a common calendar, giving the opportunity for the race teams to compete for both HRL and GPA championships.

"A partnership with Grand Prix America would allow American drivers to participate in our events and our GP drivers to compete in theirs, therefore elevating the quality of the show, as well as diversifying it," explained Didier-Bernard Seguin, HRL commissioner. "It would be a major asset for the sport and its outreach."

More information on the future partnership will be announced in the near future. ❖

MY \$0.02 WORTH

Editorial Comment by Andy Muntz



How do you start an Unlimited hydroplane race? It's a question that has vexed race officials since the very beginnings of the sport, and especially during the past three decades.

In the very first Gold Cup race, the boats started at the same time then a handicapping formula was used to adjust the finishing times to account for the different sizes of engines. When race officials realized that the winner might not cross the finish line first, the process was changed so that the starts were staggered based on a complicated handicapping system. That was soon abandoned, too.

More recently, things got complicated when a strategy developed where the driver would park his boat in a preferred lane before the start and, in the last few seconds, accelerate to the startling line.

But lots of fans and race officials didn't like the trolling.

Various forms of flag starts and assigned lanes were tried through the 1990s to get rid of trolling, but drivers wanted to return to the clock starts. When that was done, guess what happened? The

trolling returned. So a score-up buoy was tried, but that just moved the trolling to the other end of the course.

They said the boats had to remain on a plane, but that proved too difficult to enforce, so flag starts returned, but that was again unpopular. So clock starts came back, and score-up buoys, which again didn't work, and so monitors started to be used.

First there was a strobe light on the boats that flashed if their speed dropped below the minimum, but the strobes weren't reliable and were hard for officials to see, which led to unpopular referee decisions. So the sport now uses a data recorder to monitor the speeds. But, the thing is, the data recorder can't be read until the heat is over, which means the only enforceable penalty for a violation is disqualification (it's too late to run an extra lap).

Sure enough, the rule caused the disqualification of the boat that apparently won this year's race in San Diego, which led to more gnashing of teeth—not by the race team involved, I should

point out. They understand the rule. But many commentators on Facebook seemed agitated.

So, where are we on this issue? Monitoring the speed of the boats in real time would be expensive and comes with some technical challenges that I won't elaborate here. In short, that seems out, at least for now. The sport has also tried everything else—flag starts, assigned lanes, and every other variation in between, and none of them seem to work, either.

So, round and round we go.

I'm not a big fan of disqualifying an apparent winner because he went too slow for five hundredths of a second too long, but like it or not, that's the rule. That means the solution really lands on the shoulders of the drivers.

The result in San Diego should remind them that they're being monitored and if they try to push the rule too much, they will get caught. When it comes right down to it, the solution really is just as simple as that. ❖

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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.