

# UNLIMITED NewsJournal

A CHRONICLE OF SPEED



May 2020

## The Gold Cup is canceled.

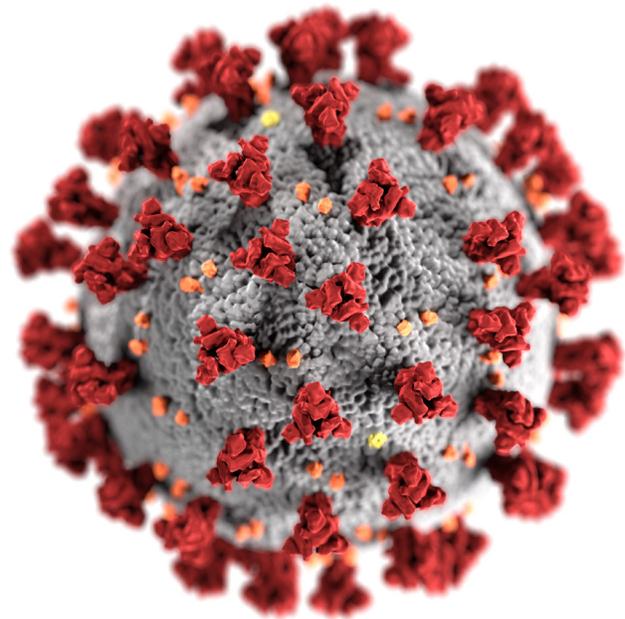
**M**adison Regatta officials announced that this year's APBA Gold Cup, originally scheduled for July 3 to 5 in Madison, Indiana, has been postponed to July 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In a statement released by the regatta, the organizers said they had considered other potential dates later this summer but decided that the best course of action would be to postpone the event to next year.

Three other races still remain on the H1 Unlimited Racing Series calendar. An event in the Tri-Cities is scheduled for July 24 to 26, the Seattle race is July 31 to August 2, and the race in San Diego is scheduled for September 18 to 20. A race that had been scheduled for the end of June in Guntersville, Alabama, was canceled in late March.

Matt True, the president of the Madison Regatta, said the decision to postpone the Gold Cup was not done lightly. "Event organizers are all being faced with the same questions and unknowns as we are," he said. "Being on the ISFA [Indiana State Festival Association] has allowed me to expand my knowledge of other events around the state, and what we are facing. Making this announcement to postpone the 70th anniversary of the regatta raises feelings of disappointment and frustration, but it's all about safety first."

The regatta statement said that the Board of Directors met on April 15 to discuss the future of the race and, with only two and a half months before their event, they felt pressure from race teams, vendors, and fans to make a decision. With the recent cancellation of the Guntersville race and in considering executive orders from the State of Indiana and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, they decided it would be best to postpone this year's race.

Jimmy Shane, the driver of the *Miss HomeStreet*, which is owned and operated by the Madison-based Madison Racing



Team, said he was saddened to hear about the event's cancellation. "In these uncertain times, it is disappointing to hear the news, but very understandable with our current environment," he said. "There are larger issues at stake around us and the safety of our loved ones is the most important."

True said the event organizers will now put their energy into planning for the 2021 event in Madison.

As for the other races on the H1 schedule, the organizers of the Tri-City Water Follies issued a statement after the Madison announcement that they continue to hope for racing in 2020, but also are being honest and reasonable considering all the factors. Although there is no word about the Spring Training event that was scheduled for June 6, the organizers in the Tri-Cities are continuing to ask boat racing fans to save the

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date for late July on the Columbia River.

In Seattle, in addition to the annual hydroplane race, Seafair organizes many events in the city throughout the summer and says it has been in ongoing communication with its sponsors, local government officials, vendors, and volunteers about this summer. A final decision regarding the Fourth of July fireworks show is set to be made on May 5 and a decision about the balance of Seafair activities is set for June 5.

There is no news yet from the group that organizes the San Diego Bayfair event.

Although an H1 race was not scheduled for Detroit this summer, the organizers of the Detroit Hydrofest were disappointed to hear that the Hydroplane Racing League (HRL) has canceled its 2020 season. A race among Grand Prix boats from the HRL was planned to be the featured attraction at their August event. Mark Weber of Detroit Hydrofest said he looks forward to the return of the HRL to the Detroit River in 2021.

“In the meantime, we will wait and see what the next month or so brings,” Weber said. “Until then, keep saving the date as it just may be a really fun time. I’m ready. How about you?”

Jan Shaw, the director of operations for H1 Unlimited, said she remains optimistic that the 2020 season will happen and that everyone stays healthy and safe. “Our hope is by June this issue will allow for everyone to once again enjoy the roostertails rather than social distancing, but sometimes serious events and issues create a new normal,” she said. “Hope to see you all at the races.”

Shaw explained that H1 is letting each race site make the decision to hold or cancel its event along with their state guidelines. “We are in constant contact with each one and helping where we can,” she said. “Each site has their own sponsors and are responding for their own ticket sales. These community events will be very important to us all when our states and nation reopen.” ❖

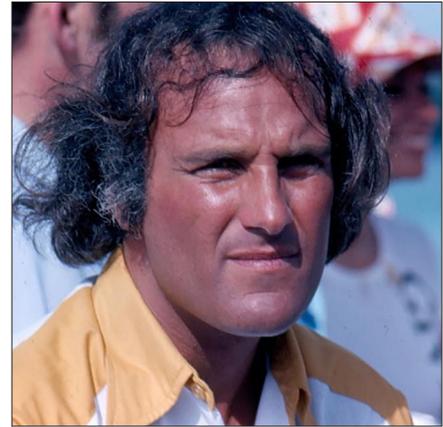
# Former hydro owner Les Rosenberg passes away.

Leslie D. Rosenberg, the owner of the *Valu-Mart*, *Weisfield's*, and *Olympia Beer* hydroplane during the mid-1970s, passed away on April 5. He was 79 years old.

Rosenberg grew up on Lake Washington, graduated from Franklin High School in Seattle, and attended the University of Washington, where played football and studied business. He served in the Air National Guard before joining his family business. His stepfather, Herman Blumenthal, was the president of Weisfield's Jewelers, one of the largest retail jewelry chains with 87 stores in nine states. A chain of discount stores named Valu-Mart was a division of Weisfield's.

Rosenberg was instrumental in convincing Valu-Mart to sponsor a series of three Unlimited-class hydroplanes from 1971 to 1973, then asked Ron Jones to build him a boat for the 1974 season: the U-74 *Valu-Mart*. He hired Billy Schumacher to be his driver.

The boat raced as *Weisfield's* in 1975 and then as *Olympia Beer* in 1976 (pictured below). During those three years Rosenberg's team won four races: the 1975 Champion Spark Plug Regatta in Miami, the 1975 Kentucky Governor's Cup in Owensboro, the 1976 Jack in the



Hank Kosciuszko

Box Regatta in San Diego, and the 1976 President's Cup in Washington, DC.

Schumacher talked at length about his career with Rosenberg in the March issue of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*.

While he owned the hydroplane, Rosenberg became good friends with Dave Heerensperger, the owner of the *Pay 'n Pak*, and through that connection became an early investor in Eagle Hardware Stores, a chain that was later purchased by Lowe's.

According to his obituary in the *Seattle Times*, Rosenberg loved his family, his hair, and his tan, but most of all loved Husky football. He was an athlete, a lover of nature, and believed in goodness and in being a good person. ❖



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

# BOB BURD: Hydroplanes at the century mark.

*Bob Burd was born on April 6, 1920, in Seattle's Ballard neighborhood. "It's a long time ago," he says. His life almost ended a few years after his birth. At age four, he went through the windshield of a Model T Ford. "I was lucky, lucky. It happened right in front of a doctor's home. That's what saved me. Otherwise, I probably would have bled to death." When he was an adolescent, he spent time working on a farm near Arlington, north of Seattle. In his late teens, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps and worked on Orcas Island. He saw boat races on Green Lake and was immediately enthralled by the sport. In the following interview, conducted on February 13, 2020, Craig Fjarlie talks with Burd about a lifetime of boat racing memories. His daughter, Carolyn Graham, listened in on the conversation and helped facilitate the discussion.*

**NewsJournal: What subjects did you enjoy in school?**

Burd: Mathematics.

**There's a picture here, it looks like you're on a tractor.**

This picture is 1936, up in Arlington. I was workin' on a dairy farm. We lost a horse, so we turned around and made a tractor out of the car. [laughs] Then in my teens I sailed to Alaska, on Alaska steamship boats, as a galley guy, washing dishes and this 'n that. Then when the war came along, I got into the shipyards as a boilermaker. I spent 40-some years as a boilermaker.

**When you were doing boiler-maker work, what all did you do there?**

Well, the last five years I traveled. Repair jobs, from Montana to Utah and Oregon and that.

**Yeah?**

The last five years. I worked for one outfit for 32 years. Puget Sound Fabricators.



Phil Lampman

**When did you see your first boat race?**

I saw the first boat race on Green Lake in 1929.

**You've been around boat racing for a long time. You were just a child then, nine years old.**

Yeah.

**Did you ever watch the Slough races?**

No, I never went up there, 'cause it was too...well, I lived in Green Lake [neighborhood] so it was ideal to go to the races when they came to Green Lake.

**“Just like when I went to work for Chuck Hickling. They said, ‘Hell, you won’t last two weeks,’ because he was so strict. But the idea is, I’ve always been working with bosses and what they tell you to do, you do it.”**

**ABOVE RIGHT:** The 4-year-old Bob Burd after the accident that sent him through the windshield of a Model T.

**BELOW:** Bob Burd riding on a farm vehicle that is being towed by a truck. This was taken at the Arlington farm where Burd spent many summers and where he says he learned his work ethic.

**You could probably walk to that.**  
It was only four or five blocks away from the lake.

**OK. So, you saw the first the very first Unlimited race, the 1951 Gold Cup on Lake Washington?**

Yeah, and I saw the Seafair race the next week.  
**What do you remember from those first races? What are your biggest memories?**  
Well, the tragedy of the *Quicksilver*. That was a bad thing.

**Right.**  
I had seen him on Green Lake, years and years earlier, back in '29 and '30. So, I remembered him from then.

**That was Orth Mathiot?**  
Yeah. And so, that was one of the worst things. You know, the first year, to have a tragedy like that in the first year.

**Right, yeah. Now, did you always go to the race or did you watch it on television later?**

Years later. But we always went down to the lake. We'd go down there early in the morning, real early, and camp out.

**Now, did you work on *Miss Bardahl* way back?**

Yeah, I spent a couple of evenings down there when we were putting the deck on.

**The *Bardahl*.**

Yeah, the '58.

**OK. How did you get to do that? Did you just volunteer?**

Well, I was at the boat show. This was '56 boat show. And all of a sudden, my father-in-law yelled out, “Hey, Norm.” This was at the old Armory.



Carolyn Graham collection

And it was Norm Evans. That's how I met him. My father-in-law introduced me to him.

**Did he know Norm from before?**

Well, Norm was raised in Brewster, and my father-in-law and my wife, they lived in Brewster. My wife was going to high school when Norm was in grade school. And then his folks moved to Chelan. He went to high school in Chelan. But that's how I met Norm. So, when he got on the *Bardahl*, then he came out to dinner to our house in Burien, and then I'd go down to the shop and we'd work a couple of evenings down there, when he could take me down there. That's when I got to meet Ron Jones, and Bev, and them.

**So, you basically helped put the deck on.**

Yeah.

**Did they show you what to do, or...**

Well, just hand...everybody that worked had to hand...they'd tell you what to do and do what you're told.

**Yeah.**

Just like when I went to work for Chuck Hickling. They said, “Hell, you won't last two weeks,” because he was so strict. But the idea is, I've always been working with bosses and what they tell you to do, you do it. I mean, in the trade, you don't really antagonize, go against what the bosses want.



Carolyn Graham collection

**Right.**

So that's why I was able to stay with Chuck for four years. He was a swell guy to work for. He always went down and made lunch for you. [Laughs]

**So, between the *Miss Bardahl* with Norm Evans and when you went to work for Chuck...**

I couldn't be on a crew as long as I was workin'.

**Yeah.**

As soon as I retired from my profession, then I could get on a crew, because I was free, and that made a difference.

**So how did you meet Chuck Hickling?**

Well, we went, Bob Williams and I and George McKernan, went back and got the '62 *Bardahl*.

**OK.**

We brought a motor back.

**It was in the boat?**

It was in the truck. We put it in the truck.

**And where did you go to get it?**

Salem, New Hampshire. He wanted the motor. So that's how I got acquainted with Chuck. I cleaned up the motor in exchange for a busted motor that he had, so that we still had a dummy engine to put into the *Bardahl* when we re-did it for display purposes, because it didn't have a deck on it. We had to put a deck and everything on it.

**On the *Bardahl*.**

On *Bardahl*. So that's how I got...so I went by, exchanging the motor. Then Chuck asked me if I would come over and work. So that was three or four days a week.

**OK.**

Carolyn: He wanted a trailer built, right?

Yeah, well, that happened later, when he started getting' ready to do the new boat. Then he needed a trailer. So, he got a trailer from, it was on the, uh, *Evergreen Roofing*, from Mark Evans.

**OK.**

So, I rebuilt the trailer to fit that tunnel boat. And so, when he found out that



Carolyn Graham collection

Bob Burd and his wife, Winnie, lean against the *Freddie's Club*.

I could work with metal, like he did with wood, why, hell, I was in, dead set with him. He was OK. That was a fun experience. They were, we had a lot of fun with them.

**So, you would go and work in the pits during the races then, too?**

Yeah.

**What was your primary job on the crew, in the pits? Did you do engines, or...**

I did the engines up in his shop. He taught me how to do them, Merlins. And, uh...

**Merlins, yeah.**

He had three. We did the motors and just...there was never more than five of us on the crew. Chuck, there was Barry Gillespie and his boy, Mark, and me, and there was a kid, another kid, young kid, there was just the five of us on the crew. That was the smallest crew I ever worked on.

**When you look at the list of drivers, you had Bob Maschmedt and Jack Schafer, Jr. How were they to work with?**

We had Scott Pierce, too.

**Oh, he's not on your list here.**

I didn't put him down there? Must've missed. He got fired. We even had Bill Muncey qualify that boat once. The first one.

**OK. But, what was their driving style like? Did they work well with Chuck?**

Oh, yeah. Schafer was a God-dang good chauffeur.

**Schafer, OK.**

He was one...in all the boats that he ran, he never had a failure. He was a very conservative driver.

**Yeah, didn't abuse the equipment.**

No, he would go out there, competing, and whatever the boat was capable of doing, that's what he did.

**OK. It looks like the next one you worked on was for Jerry Kenney, the *Frank Kenney Toyota*, the former 1980 *Budweiser*. And you had Milner Irvin.**

He got fired.

**And then Jack Schafer, Jr., again.**



Karl Pearson



Julie Hooten



Karl Pearson

Some of the hydroplanes that Bob Burd worked on during his career.

**TOP:** Milner Irvin drove the U-5 *Frank Kenney* in 1987 with its turbocharged Rolls Griffon engine.

**MIDDLE:** The U-50 *American Spirit* in 1992. The boat finished sixth in the national standings.

**ABOVE:** Burd crewed for Jim Harvey from 1997 to 2005, including with the *Freddie's Club* in 1999.

Yeah, yeah. I was the one who told Culley to go after Schafer, when he got rid of Milner Irvin.

**Mmm.**

Milner Irvin hooked a boat in the north turn at Seafair, and, uh, that was the finish of him.

**And what was your primary job on that crew?**

I helped Culley on the motors, building the Griffons.

**Ah, yeah.**

And then I built the turbos, they had turbos...

**Turbochargers?**

...chargers. I built all of that assembly. Made all that assembly in stainless steel and that.

**Next you were on *Pizza Pete*.**

Well, this was, um, *Pizza Pete* was Joe Kenney. Jerry Kenney was the boss here.

**Right.**

And then that same boat was Culley and Donery.

**Yeah, *Miss Northwest*.**

Yeah.

**So, when you worked with these different owners, were some easier to work with than others?**

Well, Chuck was dang good to work for.

**Mm hmm.**

Culley, Culley was the crew chief for all there. Chuck was the owner and crew chief.

**Yeah, so it was his way.**

Yeah. And Culley was the same way. He was the one that got the Merlins from *Budweiser* when they went Griffon.

**Yeah?**

That's how Chuck got the three Merlins.

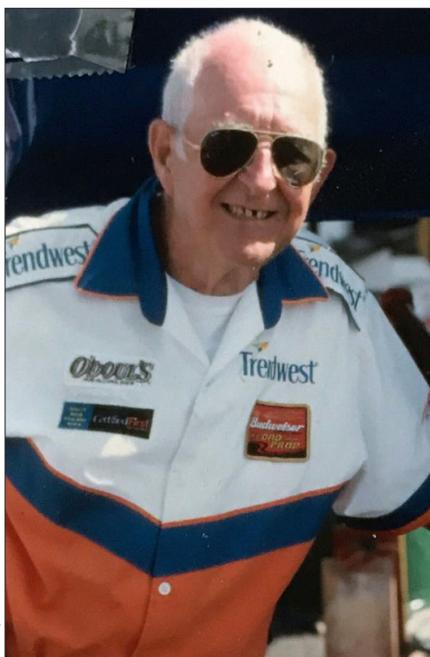
**OK, they were *Budweiser Merlins*.**

Yeah, they were *Budweiser*, Culley motors.

**OK, he had worked on *Budweiser* so he knew everybody.**

Yeah, yeah.

**Well, probably the next boat**



Carolyn Graham collection

Bob Burd wears the colors of the *Trendwest*.

**that's more interesting is when you had Bob Fendler's *Jackpot*...**

Yeah.

**...1990, new boat. Did you help with any of the construction?**

I had my name on the back end of that boat. There was Mark and Mitch and my name. The three of us.

**And you helped build it.**

Yeah, I worked on it every, all of the time. Full time.

**OK, building...**

We did it in the shop next to Jones' shop down there in Kent.

**And when you were building it, what did you do, primarily?**

Everything.

**Everything?**

We did everything, 'cause it's just the three of us.

**So, you all had to help.**

Yeah, I mean, there was just three of us doing, building the whole boat. We got the parts from Jones, you know, the canoes, and...

**Yeah.**

...baffles and materials. We cut it up and assembled it. We did all the assembling.

**OK.**

We started it in '89, in November, and finished it in Evansville. [Laughs]

**Well, you had Steve David for a driver.**

Yeah.

**Now, he was a really good driver, but he was pretty new yet in the Unlimited class at that time.**

He was almost a rookie. In '88 I think he was in that U-4 with uh, I think it was three guys. Fendler was part of that, too.

**Well, moving on, then you had the *American Spirit*, which was the '84 Atlas.**

Yeah, we tore, threw the sponsors away and put Jones sponsors on that boat.

**OK.**

And, uh, there were six of us went back to Detroit with the boat. And then at Evansville, two more guys showed up, afterwards.

**I guess it was a little before this when they stopped using the start cart and got the batteries to start the turbine engines, so they could re-start on the course. Did you have any involvement with that?**

That was, the only time that I ever saw that done was on the *U-95*.

**OK, yeah.**

They didn't have the big batteries then, they were using ordinary batteries, or something. So, *U-95* was the only one that I know of that used the starting cart.

**So, they solved that problem before you were on...**

Yeah, we had the big batteries that they're using today. And they had the battery chargers and we could, had the hook-up, all we had to do was plug it into the boat, like they do nowadays.

**OK, well, when you were working on the *American Spirit* you had Mark Evans for a driver...**

Yeah.

**...of course, Norm's son. You knew Norm. So, you had known Mark for a long time.**

He's the one that nicknamed me

"Uncle Bob."

**OK.**

That's where I got the uncle bit.

**Now, he was kind of a charger, as a driver.**

Boy, just like his dad. [Laughs] His dad was a dang good charger.

**Did you have any primary responsibilities on the crew, or did you just do everything?**

Well, from the *Frank Kenney* on, mostly in the pits it was the skid fin.

**OK.**

I was the skid fin from there on.

**That was your primary responsibility.**

My prime deal was gettin' the skid fin on and lining it up. This thing that had to be done...

**Yeah.**

...to line it up. Otherwise the driver will come in and say it ain't working.

**Yeah, it's gotta be straight.**

Yeah.

**So next you had *Oh Boy! Oberto*.**

Mike Eacret, 1993.

**Yeah, Mike Eacret.**

Yeah, he was a wild one.

**Now, he owned the boat as well?**

Yeah.

**And you were just with him for one season.**

Yeah, I wasn't with him when he crashed. [Laughs]

**OK.**

He crashed it the next year.

**Yeah.**

I went to Hawaii with him. Well, I went with the *American Spirit*. I went over to Hawaii with the *American Spirit*. That was my first trip to Hawaii.

**Then in 1994 you started with Ron Jones, Jr., the former *Circus Circus* boat.**

Yeah.

**And you had Scott Pierce back as the driver.**

That was the tricolored...

**Now, you must've known Ron Jones, Jr., for several years, since you worked...**

Well, he was *American Spirit*.

**Yeah.**

Carolyn: He worked for Ron Jones, in the shop, just working on the boat, not on the crew.

**And junior worked for senior.**

Carolyn: Yeah, at that time. That's when my dad worked for Ron Jones, Sr., and then they split and my dad worked for Ron Jones, Jr.

**OK, yeah. So, the two years with junior, Scott Pierce drove.**

Yeah.

**And you went to most of the races again?**

Yeah.

**Do you recall anything specific about those seasons?**

Well, I gave Scott Pierce a bloody nose.

**Oh! How did that happen?**

Well, we were drinkin' in a bar, I don't know, bam! I just let him have it.

**OK...**

But he...

Carolyn: Probably didn't move fast enough.

Just one of those things that happened. Scared him, apologized afterwards.

**Well, we won't worry about assigning blame or anything. Was there something else you were gonna say?**

That was the second time; he drove for Chuck, too, that one time in Seattle.

**Yeah.**

And, uh, but anyway...

**Then you got involved with Ken Muscatel, 1996.**

Yeah.

**Epson Computers, the former '82 Atlas. How did you get to know him?**

That was with Roger Newton.

**OK.**

We were re-doing the boat at Jim Harvey's shop, me and Roger Newton.

**Re-doing the boat for Ken?**

Yeah. We rebuilt the boat and we put the Jones canoes on it.



Phil Lampman

After his career on race teams, Burd volunteered at the Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum to help in the restoration of notable old hydroplanes.

**All right.**

The same as what we did on the *American Spirit*. Took the Lucero...Lucero canoes were low, I mean, they didn't sit down in the water like the Jones boats. But, hey, every boat that's run today is all Jones canoes.

**Yeah, he seemed to have a better idea for what to do.**

I mean, you can't name me a boat that don't have Jones canoes on.

**Yeah, his canoes or his style, anyway.**

Yeah, 'cause even the, uh, Fred Leland made a mold off of Fendler's boat, canoes.

**OK.**

And *Budweiser* did the same thing.

**Off of...**

Off of one of Jones' boats, see? So that's where no boat that I know of, in the Unlimited field, that ain't Jones canoes today.

**Well, to kind of digress for a bit, were you starting to work on the old boats, working with Bob Williams? When did that come about?**

That was, well, we were dreaming up the idea of starting up...I got acquainted

with him down in the pits.

**This was Bob Williams?**

Yeah. And we would...it was just a few of us that decided to start this. Bob Williams was a big instigator of the whole thing. And, uh, he asked me if I would go back east to get that *Bardahl* boat, so that's what we did in '83.

**OK, so he was starting to work on it, way back then.**

Yeah. And we brought the boat home and went out to Woodinville, got a shop in Woodinville. We had three boats out there at one time. We had the *Thriftway*, and they had the *Gale V*, and the *Bardahl*. And it was with no money hardly, it was a miracle that we even got as far as we did with it.

**Yeah, before Ken Muscatel came in and helped.**

He bought out Bob Williams. We had, I forget how many boats we had. We had over a dozen boats at the end, and Muscatel sold a bunch of 'em to Dave Bartush in Detroit.

**Right.**

Muscatel sold some of 'em there.

**So, were you doing that while you were also working on crews?**

I quit then.

Carolyn: He wasn't working on crews then, doing the old boats.

**OK.**

This is before I started on the crewing, see?

Carolyn: He was working Monday through Friday for either Ron Jones Sr., or Jr.

**OK.**

Yeah, I'd be working on the *Bardahl* and then workin' on Chuck's at the same time, you know, back and forth.

**It gets to be a little too much, maybe.**

Well, yeah, kept busy.

**Well, let's talk a little bit about your time with Jim Harvey. He had the 1993 T-Plus and you started with him in '97?**

Yeah.

**And you stayed with him clear up 'til 2005, when he got out.**

Yeah.

**What things did you do on his crew? More skid fin, or other things?**

Skid fin. I was the guy that started to make the two-wing boat into a conventional boat.

**Mmm.**

He went back to the national meeting and he wanted me to start on it. So, when he came back, the two-wing was gone. [Laughs] I got in there with a big saber saw and just cut it, so he had to make a conventional boat by then, by the time he got back.

**So, did you have some help from other people or did you just kind of know where to start?**

Ron Brown had a machine shop in the back of Harvey's shop, after he left *Budweiser*. And he helped. And then, uh, Lee Robertson was working for Ron Brown, and he helped us. You probably know his son, don't you?

**Oh, Jesse.**

Jesse was the boy, drove...

Carolyn: Didn't Jesse drive for the *Graham Trucking*, the second?

**Yeah.**

Carolyn: And Lee was his father.

Lee works on the *Graham*.

**Well, how was Jim Harvey to work for?**

[Laughs]

**Did he have his own ideas, or...**

Oh, he definitely...

**He had a lot of experience on crews, also.**

Yeah.

**But he was a little bit short of money sometimes.**

The idea was that Tom Anderson was the engine man.

**OK, yeah.**

And he always tried to say he was the crew chief, and I said, "You ain't no crew chief. Harvey's the crew chief."

**Owner and crew chief...**

Yeah.

**...just like Chuck Hickling.**

Yeah.

**Well, you had some really good drivers there. Steve David. How would you describe his style?**

He was good, until he got into...

**You had J. Michael Kelly, too, for a while.**

Well, what happened to Steve David was that he was going through a divorce, and that was affecting his driving.

**OK.**

So, we got Mark Tate to replace him. That was, and Steve David got fired.

**That was in the middle of the season.**

Yeah.

**Then Tate drove the next year, also.**

Yeah.

**You had Scott Pierce for a year.**

Yeah. I didn't travel that year, when Scott Pierce was...I stayed home that year. I didn't go back east.

**But did you work out here with them?**

Yeah, I worked out here with 'em. They were short of funds and that, so I didn't go.

**Then Mark Tate came back, and the next year they had Terry Troxell.**

Yeah, Troxell helped with building the new boat, back in Detroit. The U-2.

**And then J. Michael Kelly. One of the best current drivers.**

He's good.

**Did you ever go over to Qatar?**

No, no.

**Never went over there.**

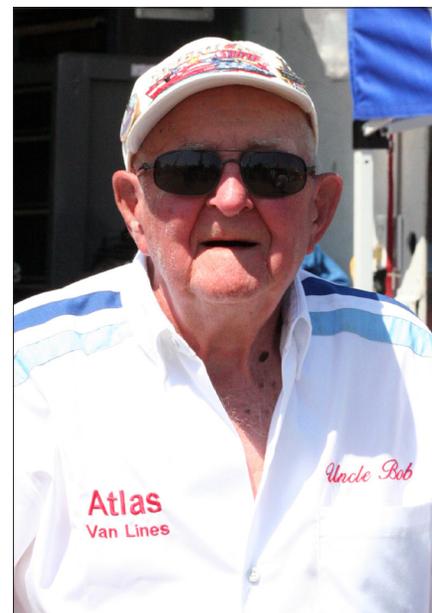
No. After that year I figured I was too old to jump into another team. I was past my time.

**So, 2005 was your last year.**

Yeah.

**When you look back at all of the racing you've seen, how would you compare? How do things look today? What are some of your fondest memories first?**

[Pause] Well, back in the old days, the camaraderie. People got together and partied. Everything's separate now. Everybody goes this way and this way and that way. That was what happened in the last years. Back in the year there was still partying. Still getting, the crews would...like Jr., would take us, or go, like in Detroit, we'd go to a certain restaurant of something, and that. And over in Hawaii, we went together. And then everybody went this way and that way, and it wasn't the same.



Uncle Bob as a member of the crew for the restored *Atlas Van Lines*.

Phil Lampman



Phil Lampman

Bob Burd and the restored Blue Blaster, the boat made famous by Bill Muncey.

**The fellowship wasn't there, or something. When you look at the state of the sport, the whole thing, how...**

No leadership. That's been the trouble down the line. Sam Cole did more than anybody that followed him. And why they got rid of him... He's with the Grand Prix now. [Sam Cole no longer heads the GP group.]

**Yeah.**

And he did a good job for the Unlimiteds.

**Of course, Sam had his father to learn from, Phil.**

Yeah. They need somebody like that. I would say like Steve David, but of course he's too busy with his real estate business and can't be bothered. But somebody like him.



Carolyn Graham collection

**Mm hmm.**

But that last guy, he was a farce. He didn't do nothin'.

**Well, of all the different drivers you worked with, is there one who stands out?**

Well, Mark and Mark. [Laughs]

**Mark Evans and Mark Tate?**

Yeah. They would be the two that I...but Steve David was all right, too.

**And J. Michael Kelly was still learning when he was with you.**

Yeah, that was it. He was just a rookie.

**But he has proven his ability.**

Yeah. Well, he showed that in outboards. You raced against him?

**I've known him since he was a child. I've known Jamie Nilsen almost that long, too.**

Yeah, yeah.

**Well, you had some things you wanted to show me.**

Yeah, I want to show you my man cave. [At this time, the tape recorder was turned off and Burd opened the door to his office. It is filled with memorabilia. A few of Seattle's professional sports teams are represented, but the overwhelming majority of the items relate to hydroplanes, everything from photos to programs to magazines to books. The interview then continued in his living room.]

Carolyn: Ask him about Jack Schafer

coming into the pits at San Diego.

**Jack Schafer, coming into the pits at San Diego?**

Oh, with the tunnel boat. I threw the rope to Jack. He hooked it on to the boat, bamoh! I was out swimming with the boat.

Carolyn: The boat came in too fast.

Yeah, well, the tunnel doesn't go down like the other boats. It keeps going because it's a tunnel. It ended three docks away.

**And you went swimming.**

Yeah, they had to fish me out.

[Laughs] I was sopping wet.

**Saltwater, too.**

Yeah, well, that's all right.

**Let's go back just a little bit more. You did some work on Seafair committees.**

Yeah, logistics, two years. Me and my wife were co-chairmen. We would get everything from the warehouse down to the pits. All the supplies and all the stuff, you know.

Carolyn: Pit tours.

That was pit tours with Bob Senior, before that. I did that for quite a few years.

**Yeah, I did that, too.**

We all did.

Carolyn: Tell about security. You were on the gate for...

Oh, that was after pit tours. I was on security, the yellow shirts, for several years.

**That was just at the Seafair race?**

Yeah.

**Did you have any interesting experiences doing that?**

Just from pit tours. That's all, because by working pit tours you got to know people, and this and that, and who to let in and who not to let in. [Laughs]

**OK, well, I think we're pretty good. Thank you.**

Yeah. ❖

*Congratulations on your 100th birthday, Uncle Bob!*

## TIME CAPSULE:

# A look back at the sport's history.

*Organized boat racing is among the oldest forms of motor-sport competition in America, this year celebrating 117 years since the American Power Boat Association was established. Each year at this time, as the warm days of spring arrive and as race teams are typically busy getting ready for another season, we like to take a moment to look back and take stock of where this sport had been 25, 50, 75, and 100 years ago.*

## 25 YEARS AGO The 1995 Season

**T**he *Miss Budweiser* team was clearly the class of the field when competition for the 1995 title got underway in Phoenix, Arizona, late in April. Bernie Little was already the most successful boat owner the sport had ever seen, by a wide margin. As the boats gathered on the shore of Firebird Lake, he had already earned 10 of the past 12 national championships, including the previous year's title. So, most fans didn't question who was likely to come out ahead in the end.

Steve Woomer, the owner of the U-10 *Smokin' Joe's*, had a different expectation, however. Like Little, he also had a sponsor that supported his team very well. He had a fast boat, an expert crew, and a talented driver in Mark Tate. Yes, Chip Hanauer, the *Budweiser* driver, had won four of the past six national titles, but Tate won the other two and was going into the 1995 campaign as the defending champion.

Like the other most accomplished competitors in the sport's history, Little never took his success for granted. He was always aware of the others nipping at his heels. So, heading into the season, his



The sport's all-time most successful owner, Bernie Little, aboard his *Miss Budweiser* in 1995.

team had completely rebuilt their most victorious boat, a craft (known as T-3) that was built in 1989 and had already won 15 races, including four in 1994. They also had the boat's sister (T-4), a boat built before the 1994 season that looked almost identical to the T-3 but had yet to be entered into a race.

The 1995 season's first event at Phoenix was one of the strangest the sport had yet seen. Staged on a tiny mile-and-a-half racecourse on human-made Firebird Lake, only two boats could be accommodated at the same time, and therefore the field was limited to only eight. Given the course's hairpin turns,

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

**ABOVE:** The T-4 *Miss Budweiser* appeared in a race for the first time at Madison in 1995 with Mark Evans in the cockpit.

**BELOW:** Mark Tate drives the U-10 *Smokin' Joe's* through the Roostertail Turn at Detroit.

there also was a clear advantage to the boat on the outside. And, with a race format that allowed the faster qualifier to choose his lane, the situation was such that the *Miss Budweiser* started each match race on the outside and went on to win the trophy easily.

Next came the Gold Cup in Detroit, and again it was a *Budweiser* show. Hanauer piloted the "new" T-3 to victory in each of its four preliminary heats and, when the engine on the *Smokin' Joe's* stalled before the start of the final, he was left largely unchallenged in the final. It was Hanauer's 10th Gold Cup victory.

Things were already looking to be the expected runaway for the *Budweiser* as the boats came to the shore of Smithville Lake in Kansas City, Missouri. But sometimes things don't happen as planned. During his first preliminary heat, Hanauer's boat took a big hop as it rounded a turn side

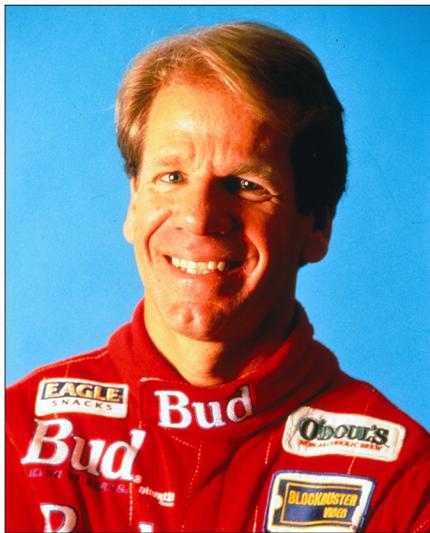
by side with the *Smokin' Joe's* and came down so hard on its right side that the hull was damaged. Yet, he still managed to finish second.

The Kansas City event was the first to feature a new race format that would be used for the remainder of the season. Instead of starting the races to a clock, the boats would get underway with the wave of a flag. Drivers could choose their starting lane in the first heat in the order of their qualifying speed; the inverse order of their finish in the first heat then determined the order of choosing lanes for the second. The order of lane choice for the third and final heats was set by accumulated points.

The format essentially meant that Hanauer and the *Budweiser* would start the second preliminary heat on the outside. He finished second again, this time behind the U-99 driven by Mark Evans, and he rounded out the preliminary



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



The top two drivers of the 1995 season.  
**TOP:** Chip Hanauer. **ABOVE:** Mark Tate

heats with a victory in Heat 3B. As for the final, Hanauer surprised everybody when he elected to start the race in the third lane. Steve David, driving the U-2 *T-Plus*, chose the inside, which he used to his full advantage. He grabbed the lead coming out of the first turn and stayed there to the end. Tate finished second and Hanauer was third.

When he returned to the dock at the end of the Kansas City race, Hanauer had to be helped from the cockpit, the victim of a torn muscle in his rib cage, thanks to the rough conditions. As a result, he was hurting badly as he qualified the *Budweiser* at over 164 mph in Evansville, Indiana. He was hurting so badly,

in fact, that Bernie Little convinced him he should leave the driving to Mark Evans, who was quickly hired to do the task. When the *Budweiser* was knocked out of the final heat with sponson damage, Mark Tate and the *Smokin' Joe's* enjoyed a convincing victory.

The T-4 *Budweiser*, which had been sitting on stand-by for a season and a half, finally was pressed into action at Madison, Indiana, with Evans still at the helm. The *Budweiser* struggled with equipment issues, it suffered broken stabilizers in both of the first two heats, but it wasn't the only boat with such problems. Several boats came away from the rough conditions with bumps and bruises (David and the *T-Plus* flipped in Heat 1B). Yet, Tate and the *Smokin' Joe's* survived and left town with a second-straight victory and only 169 points behind *Budweiser* in the national points race.

Hanauer was back in the cockpit of the *Budweiser* when the boats raced on a small two-mile course set on Lewisville Lake near Dallas, Texas. Tate was on the inside of Hanauer at the start of the final heat and thought he had been squeezed by Hanauer as they careened around the first turn, but the officials thought otherwise, and the *Budweiser* collected the trophy.

It was Tate's turn in the winner's circle when the boats raced next at the Tri-Cities. The *Budweiser*, meanwhile, went dead in the final with a broken propeller blade. But the roles were reversed again in Seattle, where the *Budweiser* collected Bernie Little's 100th career victory and *Smokin' Joe's* finished fifth. As for the national title chase, the Woomer team was ahead by a mere 156 points with only two events remaining, both on speedy saltwater courses.

The *Smokin' Joe's* was the first to find misfortune at San Diego. The boat lost a propeller during the third preliminary and its engine let go, sending parts flying through the cowling, the bottom, and the fuel lines, which caused the boat to catch fire and start smoking for real.

Luckily, in the 40 minutes they had before the start of the final heat, the *Smokin' Joe's* crew managed to get their boat repaired enough so that Tate was there beside Hanauer as the two rounded the first turn. As the pair entered the second turn, Hanauer ahead by several boat lengths, the *Budweiser* suddenly hit a hole, bounced, roiled over to its right, and tumbled into the water upside-down with its sponson torn off. Hanauer was not seriously injured, but his day was through. Tate won the restart easily and headed to Honolulu for the season's closer with a lead that was cut to only 39 points.

The expert *Budweiser* team used the four weeks between the events wisely and managed to get their boat fully repaired and in top shape by the time they reached the racecourse on Pearl Harbor. And, in the end, the result was clear. The two boats met each other in each preliminary heat, and the *Budweiser* finished ahead each time. The same was true in the final, which not only gave Bernie Little another race victory, but his fifth straight national championship.

Because Hanauer missed those two races, Mark Tate won his second straight driver's national title while his team finished second. The *PICO American Dream*, driven by Dave Villwock, finished third in the standings; the U-99 was fourth; and the *T-Plus* was fifth.

## 50 YEARS AGO The 1970 Season

**W**e learned in this series last year that the 1969 season was a year of transition. Ole Bardahl, a perennial favorite, had entered a boat carrying his name for the last time while Bernie Little would win his first national title. The season also saw Dave Heerensperger enter a strange, catamaran-shaped hydro named *Pride of Pay 'n Pak*, the first to carry that familiar name.

Heerensperger's boat turned out to



The most notable contenders in 1970. **TOP:** The *Miss Budweiser* was the defending national champion. Owner Bernie Little added driver Dean Chenoweth to the team in 1970. **MIDDLE:** In the pits at the opening race in Tampa Bay, Bill Muncey became the driver of Lee Schoenith's *MYR Sheet Metal* (left) and Leif Borgersen was the driver of the *Notre Dame*. **ABOVE:** Dave Heerensperger introduced a new auto-powered *Pride of Pay 'n Pak* in 1970. That's Ron Larsen in its cabover cockpit.

be a failure, but that didn't dissuade him from being innovative. He arrived in 1970 with another radical new idea, another *Pride of Pay 'n Pak* that was powered by a pair of Chrysler Hemi engines and that had the driver sitting in the bow, the first to do so since the accident that killed Ron Musson and destroyed the *Miss Bardahl* in 1966.

Also new in 1970 was a partnership between two of the sport's most famous personalities. In the 1950s, it would have been unthinkable in some dark corners of Seattle that Bill Muncey would ever drive for Lee Schoenith. The two were supposedly bitter enemies since Schoenith "stole" the Gold Cup away from Muncey at the 1955 Gold Cup, at least that's the story the two liked to stoke in the press as a way to garner attention for the sport. Actually good friends, with a relationship that went back well before that 1955 event, Schoenith found himself without a driver when the 1969 season ended and Muncey didn't have a ride. The solution for both was obvious.

The 1970 campaign got underway on a hot, breezy day in Tampa Bay, Florida, with Muncey driving Schoenith's U-70 *MYR Sheet Metal*, a craft that started out as the *Smirnoff* two years before when it had a dramatic V-shaped tail and other experimental components. By the time Muncey settled into the boat's cockpit, however, many of those features were gone.

Muncey won both of his preliminary heats at that first race, settled for a second-place finish behind defending champion *Miss Budweiser* with Schoenith's previous driver Dean Chenoweth now behind the wheel, then rattled off three race victories in a row, winning the President's Cup in Washington, DC, the Kentucky Governor's Cup in Owensboro, and the Horace Dodge Cup in Detroit.

But problems soon began to get in the way. The boat was heavy and slow to accelerate, mechanical woes took the *MYR Sheet Metal* out of several heats,

it finished well back in the pack in others, and Muncey was penalized twice for cutting off other boats. With all of this, the boat fell back in the standings during the last four races and ended the year third in the national standings.

Meanwhile, Chenoweth and the *Budweiser* began to pick up steam. He won both of his preliminary heats at Madison, Indiana, and outpaced the *Notre Dame* and Leif Borgersen in the final to take the Indiana Governor's Cup, but had a setback at the Atomic Cup in the Tri-Cities when the boat flipped in its first heat and its bow was demolished. That sent the team back to their shop in Seattle to get major repairs made for Seafair Trophy two weeks later.

With the *Budweiser* out, Tommy Fults in the *Pay 'n Pak Lil' Buzzard* managed to grab the most points and claim the Atomic Cup victory despite finishing behind the *Notre Dame* in the final. At Seattle, while the repaired *Budweiser* won easily in its two preliminary heats, the other competitors struggled. The *Notre Dame* blew an engine in its first heat, the *Lil Buzzard* couldn't start its second, Jim McCormick and the *Miss Madison* won one heat but was fourth in another, and the *MYR Sheet Metal* was last in one heat and failed to finish the other. As a result, Chenoweth's fourth-place finish in the final heat earned him enough points to win the trophy.

That meant, heading to the last race of the season, the Gold Cup in San Diego, the *Budweiser* team was only 27 points behind Muncey and the *MYR Sheet Metal* and a mere 229 points ahead of the *Notre Dame*.

Before the national title could be decided, however, Tommy Fults was killed in a freak accident on the Wednesday before the race. The *Lil Buzzard* pitched violently and did a slow spin-out right in front of the pits, causing enough force to break Fults's neck. It was the sport's seventh fatality in five years of racing.

The *Budweiser* and the *Notre Dame* were matched in their first preliminary heat, with Borgersen coming out ahead. They both had victories in the second round of heats and Chenoweth won again in the third while Borgersen took a third-place finish. Meanwhile, Muncey was penalized in the second heat and finished fourth in his third, which meant he didn't qualify for the final, putting him out of the running.



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

With a 304-point lead over *Notre Dame* going into the last heat of the season, the outcome looked clear, and the final offered no surprises. Chenoweth drove the *Budweiser* to a first-place finish to win his first Gold Cup and his first national title. *Notre Dame* wrapped up the year in second, Muncey was third, the *Miss Owensboro* was fourth, and a brand-new *Parco's O-Ring Miss* was fifth.

Tommy Fults is shown here at the 1970 Atomic Cup in the Tri-Cities, a race that he won aboard the U-00 *Pay 'n Pak Lil' Buzzard*. Later that year, Fults would be killed while testing the boat before the race in San Diego.

## 75 YEARS AGO The 1945 Season

**W**ell, there wasn't one. Although Germany surrendered in early May and Japan would do the same at the beginning of September, the war effort still took center stage in 1945 and there was no interest in holding boat races. The only connection to the sport came with the engines that powered P-51 Mustangs, P-38 Lightnings, and many other fighter planes during the closing stages of the war.

General Motors had built a total of 69,306 Allison engines at its Indianapolis, Indiana, plant to support the war effort while another 55,523 Rolls-Royce Merlin engines were built under license by the Packard Motor Car Company in Detroit. The vast majority of those were doing what was intended; they were attached to airplanes that were fighting the war. But when hostilities ended late in 1945, a large number of those powerful V-12 engines were still in their crates.



Algonac-Clay Township Historical Society and Museum

**ABOVE:** The *Miss America* won the Harmsworth Trophy and the Gold Cup in 1920 with the legendary Gar Wood at the wheel.

**BELOW:** Wood's good-luck charms were a couple of stuffed bears named Teddy and Bruin, who were strapped to his engine at every race.

Those unused, surplus engines would soon be available at bargain prices and would find themselves being used for many purposes, including boat racing. But, that's a story for next year.

## 100 YEARS AGO The 1920 Season

**G**ar Wood was the most dominate force in the American motor-boating world. He had won the Gold Cup three years in a row and was the first to successfully introduce the use of an airplane engine in a race boat. His Gold Cup victories had become almost too easy, in fact, so in 1920 he found for himself another adventure.

The British International Trophy, or Harmsworth, was a contest that pitted the fastest race boat from one nation against the fastest from another. First held in 1903, it was the oldest trophy in the sport and in 1920 was in British hands, thanks to a victory by a boat named *Maple Leaf IV* in 1913. During World War I, the owner of that boat, a Canadian-born British banker named Sir Edward Mackay Edgar, kept the trophy in a yacht moored at the Royal Motor Yacht Club, where it was almost destroyed during a Zeppelin attack.

Winning the Harmsworth seemed to Gar Wood as the perfect quest, so he sent an official challenge to Edgar early in 1920. The baronet responded by arranging for the competition to be held in mid-August on the turbulent seas of the English Solent, in Osborne Bay near Cowes on the Isle of Wight.

Wood immediately began building two new hydroplanes for the challenge: a craft named *Miss Detroit V* and a smaller boat named *Miss America*

that would be used on the outside chance that the water conditions on the Solent would be relatively smooth. The well-prepared Gar Wood cut no corners and tried to think of everything.

He also had the boats built so they conformed to the restrictive rules of the Harmsworth. One of those was the requirement that all components of a boat must be products of the country the boat represented. The two Liberty engines in both of Wood's boats fit that requirement with no question, but Wood had favored mahogany from the forests of Honduras for his race boats. Fortunately, with the Philippines a U.S. territory due to the results of the Spanish-American War some 20 years earlier, Philippine mahogany became a favorable substitute for the construction of both boats.

After arriving at the race site, a third U.S. challenger, the *Whip-po' Will, Jr.*, caught fire during a



Algonac-Clay Township Historical Society and Museum



Public Domain

Gar Wood returns home to Detroit with the Harmsworth Trophy in hand.

test run and sank, leaving the hopes of America entirely with Gar Wood. Helping in that effort were two lucky charms, a pair of small stuffed bears named Teddy and Bruin, complete with miniature cork life jackets and tiny wads of cotton in their ears, who had been lashed to Wood's engine for each of his races during the previous six years.

Finally race day arrived and lined up against Wood's challengers were three British defenders. Edgar had two boats, the *Maple Leaf IV* driven by Arthur Tate and the *Maple Leaf V* driven by famed British flying ace Harry Hawker. The third was a craft named *Sunbeam Despujois IV*, which was driven by Sir Algernon Lee Guinness of the well-known brewing

family and a record holder in car racing.

Remarkably, race day also arrived with smooth waters on Osborne Bay. "Listen, old fellow," said Hawker to Wood before the boats were launched. "I've lived on this strip of water all my life and never, NEVER have I seen it so calm as it is today."

Wood chuckled and replied, "Well, you see, sir, I brought my Teddy bears with me."

Hawker was first across the starting line on the first day of racing, with George Wood second in the *Miss Detroit V* and Gar Wood close behind his brother in the *Miss America*. But it didn't take long for the smaller of Gar Wood's boats to take advantage of the conditions. He

soon passed the others and finished the first of five laps around the 7.62-mile elliptical course at an average speed of 63.2 mph. Hawker gained ground during the second time around, but fell back again on the third lap and at that point the contest was settled.

With calm seas and scarcely any wind, the water conditions were even more favorable to Wood's *Miss America* on the second day of the competition. He grabbed the lead at the start and led the procession to the end, averaging 61.5 mph in the process. The British International Trophy was his!

Wood returned to Detroit with the large Harmsworth Trophy in hand and years later would repair the burnt foundation of the prize with a slab of Philippine mahogany from the *Miss America*. "If Europe ever gets this trophy back," he said, "they'll have to take with them a piece of my *Miss America*."

But, first, there was the matter of defending his Gold Cup in a race scheduled for early September.

As one-sided as the Harmsworth event had become, the 1920 Gold Cup on the Detroit River was even more so. Gar Wood was again behind the wheel of *Miss America* and his brother George again drove *Miss Detroit V*. The two were the only finishers on the first day of competition, then George Wood actually beat his brother in the second heat. But that turned around in the third, when Wood and *Miss America* beat Fritz Ericson in *Miss Toronto II* across the finish line and became the first in history to average 70 mph in a race.

That gave Gar Wood an unprecedented fourth straight Gold Cup. ❖

# MY \$0.02 WORTH

## Editorial Comment by Andy Muntz



Imagine that you have a 16-year-old son who just got his driver's license. One snowy night when the roads are covered with ice, your son asks to borrow your car because he wants to hang out with his friends and play video games.

He thinks this is a great idea even though he has never driven in the snow before. "Nothing will go wrong," he promises. But you think otherwise and you tell him, "No." When he complains, you tell him that based on your experience and as the guy who pays the auto insurance premiums, you believe that's a risk not worth taking just yet.

I can't help but think of that kind of situation now that we are in the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic. We are living through an event that is historic in its proportions. It's something that scientists will study for years to come and that authors will be writing books about a century from now.

Some have tried to minimize what's happening by saying this virus is nothing more than the flu. Yes, many thousands

of people die from the flu each year, but remember, they die despite the fact that a vaccine for flu is widely available. Imagine how many deaths there would be if there wasn't a flu vaccine?

Well, that's what we've got: a deadly virus, for which there is no vaccine, that is even more contagious than the flu.

As I write this, COVID-19 has become the leading cause of death in the United States. The number of people who have died during the nine weeks of this pandemic has exceeded the number who died in combat during the entire 10 years of the Vietnam War.

What's more, according to public health experts, we are still in the early stages of this event. An estimated 10 percent of the population may have been exposed to this virus already, but lacking a vaccine, scientists say about 60 to 70 percent of us need to be exposed before a herd immunity will be a factor.

All of us are anxious for things to return to normal. We want to get back to our jobs, watch a movie in a theater,

eat in a restaurant, and hug our grandchildren. We want hydroplanes to race again this summer. But, we also need our communities to be safe.

So, when health officials and your state governor ask you to stay home, please just listen, like you'd hope that your 16-year-old son would listen to you. They're not telling you to do these things because they're mean or stupid or want to destroy the economy. They're suggesting those actions because they're needed to get a handle on this pandemic.

When we fly on an airplane, we have to trust the pilot. When we have surgery, we have to trust the doctor. And, when it comes to this pandemic, we have to trust the epidemiologists who are studying COVID-19. They'll know when it's finally safe to begin lifting the restrictions.

So, until that time comes, let's do what our public health officials ask. By cooperating, we'll help cut the time it will take to get this pandemic behind us and our lives back to normal. ❖

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

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

The May meeting has been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Check our website for more information.