

UNJ INTERVIEW:

A peek behind the scenes with crewman David Smith

In the October 2021 issue of the *Unlimited NewsJournal* we featured an article by Dixon Smith about the development of the nitrous oxide system in the *Miss Bardahl*. Last month, we dipped into the UNJ vault and featured an interview of Dixon's father, Burns Smith. Now, we will introduce you to another member of the family:



David Smith Collection

That's David Smith at the far right with the rest of the *Pride of Pay 'n Pak* team in a photo taken when they raced in Dallas in September 1971. Also in the photo are, back row from the left, Doug Eaton, team owner Dave Heerensperger, Cyndee Schumacher's young daughter, Elaine Heerensperger, and David's brother, Dixon Smith. In the front row, from the left, are driver Billy Schumacher, his wife Cyndee Schumacher, and crew chief Jim Lucero.

Burns Smith's other son and Dixon's brother, David. David Smith grew up on Beacon Hill in Seattle and his family loved hydroplanes. His father was a key crewmember on *Miss Seattle*, *Hawaii Ka'i*, *Miss Seattle Too*, *Miss Bardahl*, *Notre Dame*, and *Miss Budweiser*. David also spent many of his hydro years in the shadow of his big brother, Dixon, a noted Merlin mechanic and innovator who won

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several Gold Cups and national titles with *Bardahl*, *Tahoe Miss*, *Pay 'N Pak*, and *Budweiser*. David learned boat building skills as a youth from his dad and helped around the *Hawaii Ka'i* and *Seattle Too* camps, then became a key member of noted teams: the 1964-68 *Bardahl*, 1969 *Notre Dame*, and 1970-75 *Pay 'N Pak*. David earned a degree in industrial design from the University of Washington in 1970, then earned his industrial design master's there in 1972. Jon Osterberg interviewed David at the Smith's Clyde Hill home three times between 2008 and 2018 for his book, *Dragon Days*, but most of this interview took place on September 23, 2021.

UNJ: What was the extent of your hands-on work on *Hawaii Ka'i III*?

Smith: That was when Joe Mascari owned it and dad was a key guy. "*Hawaii Ka'i III of Bellevue*." I was in junior high school at Asa Mercer on Beacon Hill. Before the 1960 race at Pyramid Lake, dad realized the port sponson needed repair because the primaries and secondaries were splitting. So, they took it to Anchor Jensen's place and removed the deck for access and dad had me crawl up in the sponson, because I was small. Dad handed me tools and I installed the through-bolts.

Anchor Jensen's mother came down from their apartment at the end of the

building, and she gave me cookies. Then at Pyramid, the *Ka'i* won two heats, and that same sponson blew apart in the final, but Musson still finished second, and he won the race. And my repair had held. It was the inside sponson, which doesn't take a beating like the outside sponson.

Then the boat went to Morlan Visel's shop at Lake Tahoe where the crew rebuilt the sponson with some special left-over *Maverick* plywood, and dad painted "MavericKai" over the repair with a spray can. Afterwards our family drove all night through the desert—dad had taken all three of us kids out of school—to Lake Mead for the Gold Cup, which then got canceled. So aside from that sponson re-

pair, I'd do stuff like wash the bilge, clean engine parts, do other crud stuff because I was just a kid.

You designed distinctive tails and cowlings for several UnlimiteDs, starting with the 1967 *Bardahl*. Which boats had your tails? And was your goal eye appeal, or was it functionality?

It was eye appeal. The boats were traveling billboards, and I didn't have enough aero experience to know enough to do anything aerodynamically. Since all the Jones and Staudacher boats looked the same except for their colors, I thought unique cowlings and tails could be a signature of the boats along with paint schemes. That would set the boats apart and give them better publicity as traveling billboards. All the sponsors wanted more press and I aimed to give them that. So, the first cowling and tail I designed was the '67 *Bardahl*. Art director Bill Voorhees did the color scheme, which I didn't like a whole lot, but we won a national championship.

The next year Ole [Bardahl] asked Evelyn [Manchester, his daughter] to manage operation of the boat. Somewhere along the way she teamed up with Ford, and we'd get money from Ford. The partnership was with Autolite, a Ford subsidiary. We wanted something unique, and in the planning meeting Voorhees asked my opinion, and I offered to design a new cowling and tail with a higher headrest. I mentioned that



David Smith Collection

While at Lake Tahoe in 1960, the *Hawaii Ka'i* crew rebuilt the boat's sponson with some plywood left over from the *Maverick*. As a nod to the source of the repair, Burns Smith jokingly painted "MavericKai" on the rebuilt sponson.



Eileen Crimmin



Byron Lang

ABOVE: David Smith designed the distinctive tail used on the 1967 *Miss Bardahl*. **LEFT:** In 1968 he redesigned the tail and designed an iconic checkerboard paint scheme for *Miss Bardahl*.

checkerboards represent winners and *Miss Seattle's* checkerboard tail had been distinctive. We said why not just checkerboard the whole boat, not just the tail? Everyone liked the idea. So, Voorhees and I laid it out, and it looked cool.

I read somewhere that the actual paint job was done in Los Angeles. True?

No, it was done up here, by Heiser Body Company in Seattle. The *Pay 'n Paks* were painted in California because they were built there, at Jones's shops.

In 1968, the tail assembly from the '67 Bardahl was given to Budweiser, right?

Yes, because they also had a Karelsen boat, so it bolted right on. I don't remember how that happened, probably through my father. They also wanted a new paint-design scheme, so I came up with one incorporating the old *Bardahl* tail. Bernie [Little] liked it and I sold the design to them. Next,

I left *Bardahl* and in 1969 went to work for *Notre Dame* because they had ordered a Karelsen boat. Ed suggested they hire me because I could help build it. I was familiar with running a Karelsen hull and I knew all of the *Bardahl* secrets. So, I got hired and worked whenever I wasn't in school, and I pitched the same thing: "You want a unique look? A new paint scheme?" I drew some sketches and presented them, and Shirley said, "There's my boat. Do it, David." Another unique tail, darker blue paint. The only thing Shirley insisted on was a shamrock on the tail and the university crest on the bow.

Also in 1969, the Pak catamaran doesn't work, so Dave Heerensperger trades it in for a conventional Staudacher hull with a look-alike 1966 Budweiser tail and cowling.

Yes. Once I joined *Pay 'n Pak* I suggested a tail with a little more pizzazz for that boat and did

"I mentioned that checkerboards represent winners and *Miss Seattle's* checkerboard tail had been distinctive. We said why not just checkerboard the whole boat, not just the tail? Everyone liked the idea."

renderings for Heerensperger that had a red, white, and blue color scheme. David loved it. He took it home and his wife Elaine said, “No, it’s gotta be orange.” So, we took one of the schemes he liked and made it orange and metal-flake gold. That’s how the *Lil Buzzard* got painted for 1970, as well as the Chrysler boat. But again, it was good because it was all unique.

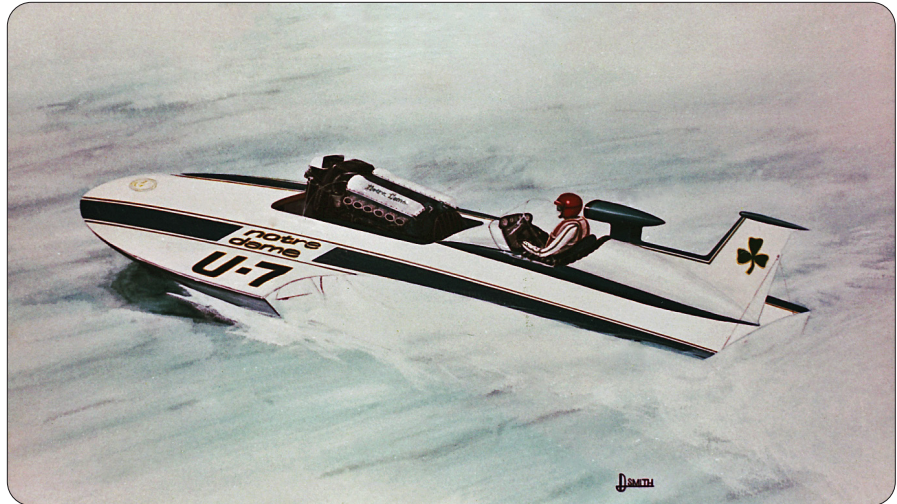
Did you change Jones’s tail on the Pak when it was converted to Merlin power for 1971? Or was that an entirely new tail?

We stripped the boat, and David said let’s put the driver behind the engine. That was good because there wasn’t a lot of room left up front after you install a Merlin and oil tank. So, I drew renderings. I wanted to use the existing tail, which was essentially a wing on edge, done very well. I cut it down because it was so tall, then I modified the front cowling, extending it, and integrated everything—cowlings, cockpit, tail.

Again, a unique look, and David liked it. So, all of that had to be done, including a new cockpit, while I’m in grad school full-time and teaching at night at UW. There’s a time crunch. So, I built it all out of Styrofoam, sealed it, fiberglassed it, then used acetone to melt and remove the Styrofoam. There’s no mold for those cowlings and tail. That’s the final product, because it’s quicker.

Was that your last major hydro-design contribution?

No, because then we got the honeycomb boat in 1973, built in Costa Mesa. I was told about the wing and I made drawings so I could build a model. We decided to cover the entire engine with a cowling, which is essentially a big wedge. We wanted the driver sitting up a bit higher so he can see over the engine. The tail was open except for the supports. So, I built a model and shipped it south, and they gave it to a metal man who built bodies for drag racers. He built all the cowlings out of aluminum and put them on the boat. And every time we hit



David Smith Collection

David Smith’s design concept for the 1969 Notre Dame.

a roostertail, I’d have to pound the thing out because it broke.

Then I actually worked on the Blue Blaster when it was supposed to be the new *Pay ‘n Pak*, before Muncey bought it. I designed the cowlings. The aero was done by Jim Larson. He wanted to check it in a wind tunnel, so I made a model and I modified it as he did the tests. Last, I designed the cowling on the turbine *Pay ‘n Pak*. Those front intakes? I didn’t understand that it would eat water and not work real well. That was basically my last contribution to boat racing.

Tell me about your year with Notre Dame in 1969.

A little quick history here. Bob Espland was a test pilot, and he also was a chief pilot for GM. Very knowledgeable, very good about following the book. Shirley [Mendelson-McDonald, the owner] let everyone go from *Notre Dame* and hired Ed Karelsen to build a new boat. Ed asked to have me around to help with the boat. Leif Borgersen was hired as driver, and Freddy Wright was hired full time. Mike Welch was the team manager. He was a good manager, not a great mechanic or wood butcher, but a good team manager. But Mike’s getting old and tired, so he left while the boat was still being built.

Espland had been working on *My Gypsy*, been around Graham Heath, so

Shirley hired him to be crew chief. He knew Allison’s but said he had Rolls manuals and it would all be fine. We had a team meeting to kick ideas around and I asked if we wanted to run what *Bardahl* had used. I explained the nitrous, popup pistons, water-alcohol, shimmed blowers, cut camshafts, weighted cranks, special oiling, all the stuff we’d developed that you wrote about in your book. And Bob said, “I know you guys did a bunch of stuff, but I think we can win races and do really well because Rolls-Royce knows more than all of you guys put together. So that’s the way we’re going to do it.”

So Bob was tasked with building engines, and he basically built stock engines. Maybe a few tweaks, like we ran nitrous, but about half the volume as *Bardahl*. And we were down anywhere from 600 to 800 horsepower all the time. So, no matter what we did, or what Leif did, we’d get beat. We didn’t have the beans to come off the corners. “Nitrous is bad because it’ll blow up the engines,” Bob said.

We did have water-alcohol because he did believe in putting on the big chrome tube. But he wouldn’t shim the blowers out because that doesn’t work on an Allison. Well, the two are different, the bearings, the scroll. But Bob wins because he’s the crew chief. So, we’re really frustrated because we took fourth, sec-

ond, sixth, seventh ... we can't buy a race, and Shirley was spending big money.

Bob was gone somewhere after the Seattle race, a week or so, I don't recall where. We had a team meeting and decided to build three engines with shimmed blowers, bored-out nitrous orifices, bumped the timing a little and so forth, and went to San Diego for the Gold Cup. Leif ran a two-and-a-half-mile lap of 116.883 and says, "This thing really goes now!" We did really well, won a fast heat, then broke a camshaft. Nobody ever breaks a camshaft. But we did, and without points for one heat, that was enough to miss the final. After that, I left for *Pay 'n Pak*.

It was a sad thing, because all that time and money that Shirley put in, she won only two races.

Okay, so that brings us to your *Pay 'n Pak* years.

I was the first crewmember signed to the 1970 *Pay 'n Pak* team. Dixon basically ran the replacement *Pak* in San Diego in 1969 because Jack Cochrane had been fired, and Dixon took over. Afterward I was asked to join along with Dwight Thorn and Jim Lucero, and we started working on the boat that turned into the *Lil Buzzard*. Then Heerenperger said, "Oh, by the way, Ron Jones is building me a twin-Chrysler boat."

David didn't consult with anybody else because he'd fired all the old crew. Well, the three of us were Merlin guys. So, I started building a new cowling and tail for the *Buzzard* while Dixon and Dwight and Jim built engines. Because Jim can work full time, he becomes the crew chief. We also brought on a Merlin airplane mechanic Dwight knew, Randy Scoville, to help build engines, but Randy never went on the road.

So, I'm in school at the UW at the start of the 1970 season, and the *Buzzard* is close but not ready. Dwight, Tommy Fults, and I went down to Tampa to race the Chrysler boat. We knew nothing about Chryslers. So, David had hired Danny Olsen, a Chrysler expert with drag racers who knew nothing about boats.

Well, the new boat looks horrible on the water, flying all over, so I cut the air traps off it with a Skil saw. We ended up with an awful finish overall [seventh out of eight boats]. We broke part of the cowling, so I had to do some fiberglass repair, and we didn't have a plastic bucket, so I used our trophy to mix the resin. We were all laughing about it, because it wasn't a winning trophy. Who cares? Later Heerenperger asks, where's the trophy? We all said, "I don't know." We had tossed it.

As the season progressed we kept blowing motors, doing horrible. By the time we got to Detroit we brought the *Buzzard* out. I drove it there from Seattle. And the decision is made that Dwight, Dixon, and Lucero are going to run the Merlin boat, and Danny and I are going to run the Chrysler boat. From then on we ran two boats.

We were pathetic, and Tommy did okay with the *Buzzard*. He won the Atomic Cup. They got Ron Larsen to run the Chrysler *Pak* starting in Detroit. He'd driven cabover Ron Jones limiteds before. [Larsen also was Keith Black's shop foreman.] The big problem with that thing was we were down 1,000 horsepower. They said our Keith Black hemi engines were going to make 1,500 horsepower each. I think they were making maybe about 1,000, blown with alcohol, and we're putting them into a common Casale gearbox. So, we're maybe making 2,000 horsepower. Dead meat. You just can't beat a Merlin to win a race.

So, was the *Pride of Pay 'n Pak* held back mostly by too-little horsepower, or was weight a factor?

It was not a light boat, but it was not a pig like the cabover *Bardahl*. The problem was horsepower. We never had a chance to work on the sponsons because we were always pulling and repairing



David Smith served on the crew of the *Notre Dame* in 1969.



Bill Osborne



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broken engines. We'd air freight them back and forth to California in special crates, bloody expensive.

In your opinion, after Fults switched to the *Buzzard*, was Ron Larsen good enough to be a winner if the *Pak* had been right?

I don't think so. I don't think he had enough experience. He seemed to be adequate, but he didn't make that boat any better than Tommy had. Tommy had never driven a cabover before, and he drove it pretty darn good. He made very few mistakes and was a good driver. But it's a combination. The boat's not really good, you're down on horsepower, and with Larsen it's a green driver.

What was your sense of Fults's temperament, his personality? As a person and as a driver?

He was pretty level-headed. He didn't seem to get anxious or nervous. He communicated very well. His wife, Susie, was with him all the time, and their little daughter, Kelli. He would drive around in his Buick Riviera, all tricked out, lowered, tiny steering wheel, candy apple, and they'd show up and park next to the boat.

He got along very well with Heerensperger because he'd gotten along well with Jack Cochrane, who could be a difficult person. "My way or the highway." We

TOP: The *Pay 'n Pak 'Lil Buzzard* hits some rough water on the Detroit River in 1970. **MIDDLE:** Tommy Fults in the cockpit of *'Lil Buzzard* at the 1970 race in the Tri-Cities, a race that he won. **ABOVE:** The team also introduced a new *Pride of Pay 'n Pak* in 1970. The boat was originally built as a cabover and was powered by twin Chrysler Hemi engines.

nicknamed him Jack the Grease because he ran sort of a sloppy operation, residue in the bilge, stuff like that. He'd get his mind set on doing something and put his blinders on without consulting with his crew, or even David. So, he got fired. But Fults stayed through that, and Fults had tried hard with the *Pak* outrigger, a real pig. They sent the outrigger back to Staudacher and got the *Buzzard* in return.

1971 was an up and down year.

We got Billy Schumacher to drive the converted boat, and we go to Miami where he has a scary accident. Billy could have been killed when that happened. He flew out of the boat, up the deck, and he took a big cast-bronze cleat off with his head. It left a big hole in his helmet. And he got tangled up in his chute and almost drowned.

Billy knew that I took care of the back of the boat, and when *Pay 'n Pak* did the loop-de-loop, I was checking everything, but the problem I didn't realize was that the pitman arm on the rudder was always a big clunky steel thing with a big, nice square key. You put it on, you put the key in there, and you tighten everything up and put a nut on the top of it. What Ron Jones did is make them out of aluminum, and yeah, I kind of knew it was aluminum, but I didn't really think about it, and there was a little tiny key in there. So, when the *Pak* did the loop de loop, what happened is the key kind of rotated in the aluminum, and the rudder failed.

Part of the problem was that we'd never gone that fast before in that boat. With the Merlin we got more speed, more torque on the rudder.

Billy was really pissed that it was a mistake that probably should have been caught. But it was from the original Jones design, and we as crew members should probably have said, "That doesn't work, that's not good enough." I didn't know any better at the time, I just said it was tight, which it was. It still came back tight but the key had shred and was rolling around in there.



Randy Hall



David Smith Collection



Randy Hall

TOP: During the winter of 1970-71, the two Chrysler Hemi engines in *Pride of Pay 'n Pak* were replaced with a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine and the boat was rebuilt to put the cockpit behind the engine. **MIDDLE:** David Smith also redesigned the boat's tail. **ABOVE:** The converted *Pride of Pay 'n Pak* during its test runs in Seattle before the 1971 season.

So, we went through a really ugly period where Billy didn't have confidence in the boat, so at 160 mph he took his foot out of it. It didn't matter what we did. Then we had the mess in Madison [a year later, in 1972] with the high water and debris and he said, "I could die out there and you guys don't care." And he walked away.

That's when Heerensperger recruited Bill Sterett, Sr., to drive the boat, who takes it out and really opens it up on the back chute. He comes in and says, "I've never driven that fast in a boat. I saw 170! You should be winning every race with this boat." After the race he learned he had a heart condition and shouldn't be racing.

But you guys finished 1971 really strong. Billy won the last three races.

Yes, he did. We really turned it around. Billy was hurt in Miami, he was still hurting in Detroit. But as he physically healed, he got better mentally. He also liked racing out here better. There's better water at the West Coast races.

The next year, after Madison, you guys got Bill Sterett Junior to drive.

Billy Junior was great, picked the boat up really quick. He proved himself when he drove around Muncey on the outside in the President's Cup. Then I had to come back home for something, so it's Headley [John Headley, a Pay 'N

Pak Stores exec and business partner], Heerensperger, and myself on the plane, and Heerensperger has me come sit up in first class with them, and he's half-tanked. And he's got a seat with the President's Cup in the seat. He got horribly rowdy. And when Headley went to the bathroom, Heerensperger says "Watch this," and he fills Headley's shoes with champagne. After the race, he had filled the President's Cup with beer and was pouring beer on all of us, he was so excited that day.

I remember Sterett had the 1972 Atomic Cup won, just half a lap to go in the final, until Gilliam got tossed out of the U-88.

We didn't change engines for the final-heat rerun. Billy said it's running great, just leave it in, so we said okay. And, bang, it blew.

About the Steretts—the other Sterett who landed in a cushy 1972 ride was Terry, Billy's brother. Was the *Budweiser* simply outclassed that year? Or was Terry not as skilled as his dad and brother?

Terry wasn't as good a driver. *Budweiser* had mediocre results, but it wasn't... Terry never did what Bill Sr. and Bill Jr. did. They were both excellent drivers. Terry never accomplished what they did, not in the limiteds, I don't think, either. Terry got the *Bud* seat because of his last name. I liked Terry, I

hung out with Terry and Billy, I got along with them. When they were crewing on *Chrysler Crew*, we hung out because we were the same age, so I even learned to speak a little "all y'all" with those guys.

You finally finished at the university in 1972, right? So, you had more time to race?

After I graduated in '72 with my masters at the UW, I worked that whole season. The next fall I started working for the City of Seattle architect's office, so Heerensperger and I struck an agreement that he'd fly me to races on Fridays with him in the Lear Jet, so I did that in 1973. I worked that whole year with Remund driving, when Dave Culley was on the crew. But it got to be too much, so when George drove those two years I worked Tri-Cities, Seattle, and flew into a couple other races.

In 1973, was Heerensperger frustrated that Dean Chenoweth beat Mickey Remund several times that year using Dave's old, heavier boat?

Yes. But he wouldn't admit it. We often said, "Dave, we're getting beat with our old equipment. How do you feel?" "Oh, you guys can just go faster, we know we have a better boat." But I'm sure he was frustrated. It was tough on us. Dean was a really good driver and he was good at getting the inside. So, we had to take him on the outside, and it's harder to win on the outside. And the *Bud*, the old *Pak*, turned really well and handled well.

Our honeycomb boat was a little lighter, a little more stable, and faster at the end of the chute. But our old boat, if you got it set up right, they'd accelerate about the same. That was a screaming boat, did a 120 average for five laps. But it was heavy—7,000 pounds. Our boat would out-turn it. When George [Henley] drove, he was always on the outside. George wasn't great at his starts, but he'd make up for it because he'd just run it harder down the end of the chutes.

So, all things being equal, do you think the honeycomb boat had a clear advantage if it had the inside?



Billy Sterett, Jr., in the cockpit of *Pride of Pay 'n Pak* in 1972.

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



ABOVE: The new "Winged Wonder" Pay 'n Pak at its debut in April 1973. It's here sporting its wedge-shaped engine cowling.
LEFT: George Henley.

Oh, yeah. A clear win.

But the difference was Dean, especially Dean in lane one?

Dean was a very, very good driver. He could hit the start right, qualify well, and corner well. But I don't think they ever beat us when Dean was on the outside. And something else important, George drove the honeycomb boat harder than Mickey did.

Okay, in general, how did George compare with Mickey?

George was not as "finesse." Mickey could maybe hit the pins better, maybe qualify a little better, but George would beat him in a race. No-

body beat George in a race. George put on another face when he went racing. He'd just go by people, even if he got a bad start. He'd come in and apologize, "I really screwed up the start, guys, I'll do better next heat."

George didn't complain. He'd tell us if something was wrong, he was always about winning. And he was nice, he was pleasant, and Mary was there all the time. She'd be on the end of the dock, the only wife I'd ever been around who would yell, "Go faster, George! Go faster! Come on!" Mary and George were even keeled, didn't bring any negativity. I never saw George angry.

I didn't know Mickey really well because I was working full time for the city, flying back and forth to races. Dad knew him and they were pretty good buddies when Mickey drove the *Bud*. Mickey was good and did a nice job of driving the boat, but I never got to know him very well. But dad knew him and liked him a lot.

What did you think of Jim McCormick when he started the 1975 season? And his decision to use a seat belt?

That was a bad situation after George quit. McCormick could hardly get in the boat he was shaking so badly. He was a nervous wreck. His hands would shake like crazy, and he'd stumble on the dock when it was time to race. He was the most-nervous driver I've ever been around in the pits. Ever. That honeycomb boat, you need to drive it hard. And at a certain speed, maybe 160, some of the drivers just back off. Some of the other drivers say, "I'll put my foot on the wood and go as fast as it will go."

"Nobody beat George in a race. George put on another face when he went racing. He'd just go by people, even if he got a bad start."



Like Dean after the 1973 "race in the rain," asked how hard he was trying, he said, "The floorboard is the floorboard."

I think Dean outdrove everybody that day, he just didn't have enough boat underneath him. But in *Pay 'N Pak*, as far as I'm concerned, the best driver was George. Now, Muncey did a good job in that boat later. But one thing about it, you could spin that boat real easily. Ron Armstrong spun it in 1977 in Tri-Cities and also here in Seattle in the north turn. That's when we brought it back for two races as the *Pay 'N Pak*. Dixon was crew chief and I worked on the boat, took a week of vacation to repair the sponson.

But back to McCormick and the seat belt. I wasn't there, but I heard from the other crew guys that they thought it was a bad idea. I think Jim felt it would give him more stability because he was bouncing around. Realistically, if we'd built a better seat for him, he wouldn't have needed it. The boat rode hard. It wasn't bad once you got up and flew it like George did. Anyway, the team knew McCormick wasn't going to work out early on, so Dave went to George and Mary and asked what it would take to drive the boat. Mary said no, we're too busy, they were remodeling their house, so Dave pulled in some *Pay 'N Pak* people to do the work and said, "Come on, George, you're going racing."



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

The "Winged Wonder *Pay 'N Pak*."

Schumacher did well in *Weisfield's* in 1975. You knew him pretty well from your *Bardahl* days together.

Billy and I were actually pretty good buddies because I had worked on the checkerboard boat, my dad and Bill Schumacher Sr. were friends, and I'd known Billy from when he drove the *Dough Baby* 280. Billy loved the *Weisfield's*, it handled really well. He pushed harder and wasn't afraid of that hull like he had been with the *Pay 'N Pak* after it did the pirouette at Miami in 1971, when we screwed up with the rudder.

When was the last time you worked full-time as a crewman?

By 1976 I'd stepped away as a boat racer, except for those two races in '77, when Muncey let us run the old *Pay 'N Pak*. There wasn't time to be good as both

a boat racer and a designer.

To finish up, do any fun stories or key moments come to mind from your *Pak* years?

I remember the 1974 Gold Cup here, at Sand Point. We were racing side by side with *Budweiser*, the old *Pay 'N Pak*. We're going into the water for the final heat. We're lifting the boat up at 10 to the five, 15 minutes till the start of the race. Dixon is pushing on the skid fin, it goes "thunk, thunk," and he yells "Drop the boat!" The skid-fin bracket was broken. We'd missed that after the prior heat.

I'd brought my usual stuff from the shop, spare aluminum and hardware and stuff. I ripped the skid fin apart, put an angle on, this and that. I didn't have enough weight to punch a hole through the aluminum, so Dixon got on my shoulders and I became the human drill press, in the pits, on a piece of plywood. We finished and it's just a couple minutes to the one-minute gun. We jerked the boat off the trailer as fast as we can, and George grabs me by the arm and says, "Are we okay?" Meaning, "Did you do that right? I'm not going to die out there?" I said, "We're good to go. Go win the race." He smiled, put his helmet on, went out and won the Gold Cup. It was so reminiscent of *Bardahl* at the '65 Diamond Cup, and other times. Our teams never missed a heat. ❖



Randy Hall

The *Pay 'N Pak* nears the dock while its prime nemesis, the *Miss Budweiser*, the former *Pride of Pay 'N Pak*, lurks in the background.

FROM THE UNJ VAULT: THE APPLE CUP REVISITED.



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

BY BOB SENIOR

Unlimited hydroplanes raced on Lake Chelan in the heart of Washington’s famous apple-orchard region between 1957 and 1960. The Chelan races were a natural extension of the “hydromania” that swept the Pacific Northwest as a result of Stanley S. Sayres’s *Slo-mo-shun IV* bringing the sport west in 1950.

Lake Chelan is a 60-mile-long body of water nestled along the eastern slope of the Cascade Mountains. Chelan, Washington, small-town USA, with a 1957 population of 250 and about 40 miles from a city of any size, decided to go “big-

league.”

Through the planning of such men as Norm Evans and Jack Lafferty of Chelan, Jerry Bryant of the Seattle Seafair race committee, driver Lou Fa-geol, and Jim Forney, who became the first race chairman, the Lake Chelan Boat Racers, Inc., organization was formed. The Apple Cup races were held in the month of May each year and served as the curtain-raiser each season.

This review of the Chelan competitions will document the four Apple Cup trophy races and will provide memories of such items as the debut of several brand-new boats, appearances by



Bob Carver Photos

ABOVE: Perhaps the most famous of all the excellent photos taken by Bob Carver is the one known as the "Flying Wahoo," which was taken during the 1957 Apple Cup. **BELOW:** The William Waggoner race team included both the *Maverick* and *Shanty I*. With Bill Stead driving, *Maverick* was the winner of the 1957 Apple Cup

such long-forgotten drivers such as Dick Short, Del Fanning, and Jim McGuire, as well as Chuck Hickling's initial thunderboat victory.

1957

The first Apple Cup Unlimited hydroplane race, held on May 5, 1957, was a trouble-strewn event, as the three favored boats conked out before the full 90 miles were run. William T. Waggoner's entry, *Maverick* (ex-*Rebel*, *Suh!*) ran almost faultlessly to earn 1,200 perfect points and first place in the apple country's new event. Another boat that had not been too successful to date, Bill Boeing, Jr.'s *Miss Wahoo* piloted by Czech refugee Mira Slovak, finished second with 1,000 points.

Hawaii Ka'i III, driven by Jack Regas, and a favorite to take the cup, was top qualifier at more than 113 mph for the three qualifying laps. Bill Stead was the next-highest qualifier aboard *Maverick* at more than 112 mph.

The order of finish in the preliminary heats was:

- ◆ Heat 1A: *Hawaii Ka'i III*, *Miss Wahoo*, and *Miss Seattle*. *Miss Thriftway* threw a rod and did not finish.
- ◆ Heat 1B: *Maverick*, *Shanty I*, and *Miss Bardahl* (the ex-*Tempest*) did not finish.
- ◆ Heat 2A: *Miss Wahoo* and *Shanty I*. *Miss Seattle* did not finish (threw a rod) and *Miss Bardahl* did not finish due to an overheated gearbox.
- ◆ Heat 2B: *Maverick* was the only finisher. *Ha-*



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



Ole Bardahl got involved in Unlimited hydro racing in 1957 as the sponsor of Norm Christiansen's boat, which raced the previous year as *Tempest*.

waii Ka'i III did not finish due to a twisted quill shaft and *Miss Thriftway* scored a DNF after leading *Maverick* by 30 seconds midway through the heat.

The final heat was theoretically a lulu, with *Hawaii Ka'i III*, *Shanty I*, *Miss Wahoo*, and *Maverick* pitted against each other. Mira Slovak was apparently stuck in the pits unable to get the engine of *Miss Wahoo* going until almost the one-minute gun, finally dashed down the course and turned on the wrong side of a buoy, but crossed the starting line first. The illegal starting maneuver cost an extra lap, so *Miss Wahoo* was actually one lap behind from the beginning.

As the boats neared the west turn, *Hawaii Ka'i III* held the lead over *Shanty I* and it looked like a ding-dong, 10-lap heat, but the wind had come up and was dusting the surface of the previously calm lake with pretty fair waves. The *Ka'i*, which had been repowered with a new motor between heats by the *Slo-mo-shun* crew, slammed into a wave—tearing the cowling off and conking her out for good.

Shanty I, hot on *Ka'i's* tail, hit the same wave and went into a violent spin that tossed driver Russ Schlee into the water some 40 feet away. Schlee got back aboard and worked the boat to the inside of the course, but she was holed and leaking, which spelled the finish for *Shanty I*.

Meanwhile, *Maverick* was leading *Miss Wahoo* around the course when Stead spotted Schlee in the water in the west turn. Stead slowed, but Schlee waved his teammate on, so he continued

his charge to the checkered flag. Slovak and *Miss Wahoo* tried to catch the flying *Maverick*, but could not do so. *Miss Wahoo*, one lap behind because of that illegal start, had to be content with second place.

1958

The second Apple Cup was held May 11, 1958. Hometown boy Norm Evans was in the seat of *Miss Bardahl*, which had been christened just one week prior to the race. Also engaging in their first competition were *Miss Thriftway*, a replacement for the boat that disintegrated at the Madison Regatta the year before; *Miss Spokane*; and *Miss Pay 'n Save*.

The field of qualifiers was rounded out by William Waggoner's defending champion *Maverick*; the cabover *Thrift-*



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



Bob Carver Photos

TOP: The pit area on the shore of Lake Chelan in 1958.
ABOVE: The lone representative of the Eastern race boats was *Miss U.S. I*.

way, *Too*; *Coral Reef*, the re-christened *Miss Rocket*; *Miss U.S. I*, which was the lone Eastern entry; *Miss Burien*, the former *Miss Bardahl*; and *Miss Seattle*, formerly *Slo-mo-shun V*.

Of the 10 qualifiers, only one dropped out for mechanical reasons during the qualifying heats. Machinery was functioning perfectly and each section of each heat was a real contest. There is a reasonable explanation for this. The revised 1958 racing rules called for preliminary heats to be shortened from 30 miles to 15 miles, shifting the emphasis from endurance to speed.

The order of finish in the qualifying heats was:

◆ Heat 1A: *Miss Thriftway*, *Miss Bardahl*, *Miss Seattle*, *Miss Burien*, and *Coral Reef*.

◆ Heat 1B: *Thriftway, Too*; *Maverick*; *Miss U.S. I*; *Miss Spokane*; and *Miss Pay 'n Save*. *Maverick* was disqualified for fouling a buoy on her third lap.

◆ Heat 2A: *Maverick*; *Miss Bardahl*; *Thriftway, Too*; and *Miss Spokane*. *Miss Pay 'n Save* did not finish due to gearbox trouble.

◆ Heat 2B: *Miss Thriftway*, *Miss U.S. I*, *Miss Burien*, *Coral Reef*, and *Miss Seattle*.

The new rules provided that the contest be decided on points scored in the final 30-mile heat only, and that final heat turned into a heartbreaker for the



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

In its first race, the brand-new *Miss Bardahl* won the 1958 Apple Cup.

two Thriftway boats, each of which had led the pack in the preliminary heats. *Thriftway, Too* suffered a hole in her bottom during the early stages of the finale and fell out in the third lap. *Miss Thriftway*, looking as though she were going to make it three firsts in a row, developed engine trouble and dropped out during the eighth circuit.

Norm Evans, driving the Ted Jones-designed, Ron Jones-built *Miss Bardahl*, had a great duel with Fred Alter aboard George Simon's *Miss U.S. I* in the final heat. With no intention of losing the \$1,500 purse, Evans stuck his foot on the throttle and roared over the finish line to get the first checkered flag in his Unlimited racing career.

Miss U.S. I finished second, followed

by *Miss Spokane*, which was driven by jet pilot Dallas Sartz in his first boat racing competition, and Bill Stead aboard the *Maverick*. *Miss Burien* lost part of her sponson and did not finish.

1959

Twelve boats qualified for the third Apple Cup on May 10, 1959, including three brand-new hulls. The new *Miss Thriftway* replaced the U-60 that was destroyed after sinking a U.S. Coast Guard patrol boat the previous season at the Seattle Gold Cup race. The new U-00 *Maverick* replaced the U-12 *Maverick* that burned and sank at Lake Tahoe during preseason testing. Sam DuPont's new *Nitrogen* from Wilming-



Bob Carver Photos

Chuck Hickling drove *Miss Pay 'n Save* to victory at the 1959 Apple Cup.

ton, Delaware, was the biggest unknown quantity.

Don Wilson, aboard *Miss U.S.*, broke the course qualifying mark at over 116 mph, only to watch the new *Maverick* take the Harry Wolfe Trophy for the fastest qualifier at 117.648 mph. The race was shaping up as potentially the best ever, with but one small cloud of uncertainty—the wind.

On Friday and Saturday, the winds gusted to 30 mph and the course was closed early both days. The starting time for the first heat was advanced two hours. Television people whined, but so did the wind.

In Heat 1A, Bill Muncey in *Miss Thriftway* turned in a truly magnificent driving job. Starting in fourth place, he worked his way through the pack to victory. *Miss U.S.* was second, *Maverick* was third, and *Wahoo* finished fourth, followed by two rookies: Don Dunnington in *Nitrogen* and Dick Short in *Fascination*.

In Heat 1B, Chuck Hickling in *Miss Pay 'n Save* and *Miss Bardahl* jockey Jack Regas hit the starting line on the button, with Bill Brow and *Miss Burien* hot at their heels. *Miss Burien* blew her engine on lap three, but *Bardahl* and *Pay 'n Save* had a great duel.

On the final lap Regas and *Bardahl* went for broke, but Hickling closed the door and *Pay 'n Save* finished first. *Miss Bardahl* was second and *Miss Spokane* third. Brian Wygle brought *Thriftway*, *Too* home fourth and Harry Reeves and *Coral Reef* were fifth.

By the time Heat 2A rolled around the wind had picked up. *Maverick* hit the line first and took the lead on lap one. After two laps *Thriftway*, *Too* blew a gearbox. On the third lap *Maverick* hooked and driver Bill Stead ended up on the deck. He waved that everything was OK, but then discovered his boat was sinking.

The heat was stopped and *Maverick* was towed back to the pits, a foot-square hole showing in the side of the sponson.

With water conditions worsening, harried officials quickly called for Heat



The Apple Cup pits in 1959 with *Miss Wahoo* (left) and the new *Miss Thriftway* on the sling.

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

2B. During that heat the water was getting a little tough. *Miss Bardahl* seemed to have a slight edge in rough water and finished in first place, followed by *Miss Thriftway*, *Miss Spokane*, *Wahoo*, and *Coral Reef*.

The re-run of Heat 2A saw no better water. The brisk chop was soon replaced by rollers, and these conditions didn't allow any challenging. *Miss Pay 'n Save* got out in front and achieved her second checkered flag of the day. *Miss U.S.* came in second, followed by *Nitrogen*. *Fascination* failed to finish.

The lake was now a blanket of whitecaps. A vote by the drivers asked for a postponement, so it was decided that one boat would try the course. *Miss Bardahl* was put into the water, it porpoised for one lap, and Regas came back to the pits giving his thumbs-down gesture to substantiate his performance on the racecourse. The final heat was canceled, and the race declared a contest.

With two heat victories and 800 points, Chuck Hickling and *Miss Pay 'n Save* took home the cup.

1960

Newspaper accounts of the final Apple Cup, held on May 8, 1960, headlined the “tiff” between Mira Slovak and Bill Muncey. Slovak appeared to be the culprit as the two drivers

aimed roostertails at each other during their two matchups.

Slovak and *Wahoo* only scored 400 points for the day, finishing fifth overall. Muncey and *Miss Thriftway* earned 1,025 points and gained first-place honors.

The new *Miss Burien*, replacing the old boat that sank the previous year at the Diamond Cup, made her first appearance and was driven by Chuck Hickling. Another new boat made her debut, Bob Gilliam's *Miss Everett*, driven by Red Loomis. The former *Miss U.S. II*, renamed *Miss Tool Crib* and driven by Del Fanning, had mechanical gremlins and failed to qualify.

Other entries included the *Miss Thriftway*; *Wahoo*; *Miss Bardahl*, with rookie Jim McGuire at the wheel; Joe Mascari's *Hawaii Ka'i* with Ron Musson driving; *Miss Spokane* with another rookie, Rex Manchester, piloting the “Lilac Lady;” and *Nitrogen*, the only Eastern contender, with Norm Evans driving.

In Heat 1A, the boats were packed at the start except for *Hawaii Ka'i*, which trailed. Musson stomped on it and blew a supercharger. The remaining three boats hit the first turn in a fountain of spray and Muncey was washed down. The *Thriftway* lost two-thirds of a lap before Muncey could restart the engine. *Wahoo* meanwhile had come off the exit pin first, closely followed by *Nitrogen*. They



Bill Muncey won the last Apple Cup race aboard *Miss Thriftway*.

finished *Wahoo*, *Nitrogen*, and *Miss Thriftway*.

Heat 1B again had a good start. Musson drove *Miss Bardahl* into the first corner first with *Miss Burien* right behind. *Miss Spokane* and *KOLroy I* trailed. *Bardahl* retained the lead throughout the entire heat. *Miss Burien*, pressing hard on the first turn of lap two, hooked and spun out. Hickling got it going again and the ailing *Miss Spokane* turned into the infield with an expired engine. *Miss Burien* regained second place ahead of *KOLroy I*.

Miss Spokane and *Hawaii Ka'i* were out for the day, so the field was shortened

to seven boats and a single-section Heat 2 was scheduled. The highlight was a rematch of the first heat duel between Slovak and Muncey.

Slovak took a two-boat-length lead and took the buoys close in *Wahoo*. Muncey took the *Thriftway* wide and would dive in on the exit buoy. On the third turn of the third lap, this cost Muncey another bath.

He got going again quickly, and by this time *Wahoo* began to show signs of heating up. As *Wahoo* went dead in the water, *Thriftway* took first place. Steady-driving Norm Evans in *Nitrogen*

was second, followed by *Miss Burien*, *Miss Bardahl*, and *Miss Everett*.

The final heat was a repeat of the field for Heat 2, with the exception of *Wahoo*, which had pushed a rod through the side of the engine. *Miss Thriftway* had no trouble getting out in front. Muncey held the lead, took the checkered flag, and captured the cup.

Norm Evans was doing a good job of cornering in *Nitrogen* but his boat just didn't have it in the straightaways. *Miss Burien* was right behind *Nitrogen* and finished third. Musson worked hard to make up for a poor start in *Miss Bardahl* and came in fourth, while *Miss Everett* limped in fifth.

After four years of Unlimited hydroplane racing, the Chelan races were canceled amid a combination of increased sponsor's expenses, crowd-control problems, and perhaps simply the fact that a major-league sporting event became just too large for small-town America to handle any longer. †

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Remembering the REAL Miss Bardahl

BY BILL OSBORNE

On December 11, 2021, Evelyn Bardahl-Manchester-McNeil passed away after an amazing life. She grew up in the spotlight as Ole and Inga Bardahl's daughter. She dealt with success and tragedy in life in the same way—with pure grace and class. It would have been easy for her to urge her father to give up unlimited hydroplane racing after the events known as Black Sunday occurred, when she lost her good friend Ron Musson and her husband, Rex Manchester, on the same day in 1966.

Evelyn urged her father, Ole, to continue racing. In the next two years, *Miss Bardahl* won two APBA Gold Cups and two national championships. From that time forward, she remained a strong supporter of the sport.

While Ole was the listed owner of the boat, Evelyn was the one who made most of the owner decisions regarding *Miss Bardahl* in 1967 and 1968. Evelyn wasn't concerned about publicizing herself, so very few people outside of the team realized the role she took making the team successful.

When Ole Bardahl passed away in 1989, Evelyn took over the reins at Bardahl Manufacturing Corp. For the last 25 years of her life, Evelyn was married to Hugh McNeil. Hugh, as CEO, and Evelyn kept the Bardahl name alive worldwide.

Starting in 1953, Bardahl became a name at the Indianapolis 500 race, sponsoring Clay Griffith. In 1969, Bobby Unser started third and finished third driving the Bardahl Lola Offenhauser. Evelyn's third-oldest son, Wade Manchester, shed light on this incredible woman.

"By that time, Mom was the face of the company at Indianapolis. One thing most people don't know about her is that she was the first woman allowed to walk down Gasoline Alley at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway when Bobby Unser was driving the Bardahl car. She also oversaw the sponsorship of Bardahl's P-51s at the Reno Air Races and, of course, did a great job serving as the owner of the *Miss Bardahl* hydroplane.

"My mother was special in so many ways," Wade continued. "Despite her responsibilities of leadership at the company and Bardahl's racing activities, she always placed her family first. She was the best mother anyone could want. I was always proud to say that she was my mother. She was beautiful woman and an even nicer person. She treated everyone equally. She walked on the dirt just like everyone else. She made all six of her children feel special."

Mark Manchester reflected on his mother: "After my fa-



ther, Rex, was killed in 1966, she was left to raise her six kids as a single mother. She attended every football game I played as a kid. Rain or shine, she was there cheering for me. She treated all of her children the same way. No matter what else was happening, we knew that we came first in her life.

"There are two things people probably don't know about her. First, she loved to walk the beach and collect agates. Second, she loved old movies. Mom loved the classics and could tell you who starred in them.

"A funny thing happened regarding the television show, *Mad Men*. Someone asked her if she ever watched the show. She said, 'Watch it? I lived it!' She was the kindest, most-loving mother anyone could ever imagine."

"I first got to know Evelyn when I tested the cabover *Miss Bardahl* in 1966," Billy Schumacher said. "After Ron's accident,

I thought Ole was finished racing. When they decided to race in 1967, Evelyn was very supportive of me, and she made that experience wonderful.

“I knew that she wanted us to win, but she never pressured me to do anything that was unsafe. I knew right away that my safety was very important to her. As an owner, she made sure that we had everything needed to win races.”

The 1967 season was amazing for Billy and the *Bardahl* team. “We won the Gold Cup and the national championship and had a lot of fun racing for Evelyn that year,” Schumacher said. “For 1968, we needed some parts to improve performance and she made sure that we had what we needed. As an owner, she was very supportive and appreciative of our performance.”

Billy Schumacher was emotionally moved as he discussed the loss of his dear friend. “Evelyn was much more than a race team owner. I thought the world of her. Evelyn was the nicest person I ever met. I never heard her say anything mean about anyone. Fifty years after I quit driving *Miss Bardahl*, I considered Evelyn one of my closest friends. I can’t begin to tell you how bad I feel about losing her!”

Evelyn’s daughter, Leslie, shared thoughts of her mother. “She was a fabulous mother. As my brother said, she made each of us feel like we were her only child, not something that was easy to do considering that she had six children. Once dad passed away the hydroplane extended family became our family. Years after Bardahl stopped racing, you saw me at the races. I had surrogate uncles with crew chiefs, owners, and drivers and that was because they loved my mom.

“Everybody loved her. Bill Muncy, Bernie Little, and so many of them welcomed her because she warmed the hearts of everyone. She was a charmer and an honest, loving, smart, wonderful woman with no pretenses. I don’t think she had an enemy in the world.



Bill Osborne

Evelyn Bardahl-Manchester celebrates with driver Billy Schumacher the victory of *Miss Bardahl* in the 1967 Atomic Cup at Tri-Cities, Washington.

“Because of my mom, Mark and I felt like we had a family with the hydroplane community for many years. I have had so many people writing on my Facebook page, and they have all said how much they loved her. My friends called her a ‘rock star! You were so lucky to have her as your mother.’ As she got older, she got a little more glitzy and glamorous, which was funny. She would paint her nails crazy colors for parties. She was bigger than life. Like I said earlier, she was the best mother in the world!”

Another long-time friend, Roger D’Eath, had nothing but complimentary comments regarding the loss of his friend. “Evelyn was a great, caring, and kind woman. When Evelyn spoke, her children listened. She was strict, but fair with them. Raising six kids by herself wasn’t easy, but she did a great job as a

parent. As a result, all of her children have become wonderful adults, largely due to her dedication as a parent.

“When Ole Bardahl passed, Evelyn took over the company and kept the company operating successfully. Everything Evelyn did, she did it with class, style and grace!”

David Smith reflected on his time with Evelyn during the last two years of the *Miss Bardahl* team. “After the 1966 accident, we all thought that Bardahl was never going to race again. All of the crew was let go. I was back in school at the University of Washington when Jerry Zuvich called me and said, ‘We are going racing again. Do you want to work on the crew?’ I said that I would join the team.

“I am not sure how much influence Evelyn had on Ole to go boat racing, but she was concerned that STP was coming

on really strong and Ole didn't believe in advertising. He thought the product would speak for itself. Evelyn was the person who said that Bardahl needed to advertise. She believed that we needed to do things like racing.

"When we started on the 1967 boat, she was the one who ran the operation. That season was easy for us, as we won races at 90 miles per hour. We needed to go faster in 1968 and she was willing to give us the resources to improve, which we did."

"Evelyn was really good as an owner. She always took the time to talk to each of us. She didn't push us hard as Ole did, but she still wanted good performance. When we needed new parts, Jerry would explain what we were doing, and she made sure that we had what we needed.

"She made the deal with Autolite, which brought in money to defer a lot of

the cost of racing. She realized the value of advertising more than Ole did, so she spent a lot of energy promoting the company. She always treated me very well and I enjoyed the time we spent together. She was certainly a wonderful person!"

Dixon Smith had limited contact with Evelyn as *Miss Bardahl's* owner, but he, like so many others, had high praise for her. "I worked on Ron's boat and at that time Ole was running the team, so I had limited contact with her. She was always nice and gracious to me. When I restored the boat, she took a lot of interest in it."

Writing this story was difficult for me as it is hard to convey what an amazing woman Evelyn was. I first met her in 1965 at Seattle's APBA Gold Cup race. I had very little interaction with her until Art Johnson of Bardahl formally introduced us in 1967. At that time, I was be-

ginning my unlimited hydroplane photography odyssey.

Later that year, I showed her a few images I took of *Miss Bardahl*. She was kind and polite as she looked at the pictures. She told me that Art was the one who might purchase images. In 1968, I sold Art images and helped produce a poster, showing four *Miss Bardahl* hydroplanes. She thanked me for helping produce the poster.

Personally, I knew Evelyn for more than 50 years. One thing that I admired about her was the way she treated people. It didn't matter if you were Bernie Little or a fledgling photographer from Seattle, she treated everyone equally.

Every time I saw her after the *Bardahl* years, she always remembered me and was very nice. I feel so blessed to have known this woman who brought style, class, and grace to everything she did. ❖

HERITAGE

Historical Perspective by Craig Fjarlie



SURPRISE WINNERS

Throughout the history of boat racing, the winner of any given race could be predicted by an educated guess. One or two boats dominated the winner's circle, while the rest of the field was along for the ride. Once in a while, however, the foregone conclusion turned out to be wrong. A surprise winner tipped the tables and slipped in for a long-awaited victory. We'll look at times when the pundits went home in virtual disbelief and reporters had to figure out what factors conspired to produce the unexpected outcome.

Delphine X was new in 1949 and was unable to qualify for the Gold Cup that year. In 1950, while testing before the Gold Cup, the boat rolled over, injuring driver Walt Kade. Later in the season,

it scored its only victory at the Imperial Gold Cup in New Martinsville, West Virginia.

Jack Schafer had two new boats in 1953, a twin-Allison *Such Crust III* and a single-Allison *Such Crust V*. The latter showed a flash of brilliance at the Detroit Memorial when Bill Cantrell drove it to second place, but lost propellers in two heats at the Gold Cup in Seattle. New Martinsville was where the *V* scored its only win. The boat was later sold to J. Philip Murphy who campaigned it as *Muvalong*.

Miss U.S. II was George Simon's new boat in 1956. Don Wilson occupied the cockpit when it won its only race, the Silver Cup in Detroit. Engine trouble and a disqualification kept the boat out of the

final heat at the Gold Cup.

The first *Gale VI* was a monster of a boat with its twin Allison engines. New in 1955, its third race was the 1956 St. Clair Regatta, where Lee Schoenith drove the boat to first place. That was the lumbering giant's only victory. It was replaced by a namesake in 1959.

Bill Harrah entered Unlimited racing in 1962 when he bought the former U-00 *Maverick*. The first *Tahoe Miss* had seen better days and Harrah unveiled a new *Tahoe Miss* the following year. With Chuck Thompson in the cockpit, Harrah was hoping for great things. Unfortunately, the boat was heavy, which meant lighter boats such as *Miss Bardahl*, *Miss Thriftway*, and *Miss Exide* could outrun it.

One time during the season things came together for Harrah. At Seattle, *Tahoe Miss* took first place. The boat later

was campaigned by low-budget owners where it helped fill out the entry list as a back-marker.

When the Thriftway team retired following the 1963 Seafair race, Bill Muncey became available to drive for other owners. He occupied the cockpit of the new *Notre Dame* in 1964 and started the season with a victory at Guntersville. Muncey moved on to other boats at the end of the year. *Notre Dame* did have one other win. It was awarded first place at the 1966 President's Cup, although it was one of the boats involved in the final-heat tragedy.

Another new boat in 1964 was the second *Mariner Too* owned by Jim Herrington. The craft failed to make the field at the Gold Cup in Detroit, but at the end of the season, Warner Gardner drove it to victory in a new race at San Diego. That was the only race the boat would win.

Herrington had better luck as an owner, however. In 1966 his other boat, *Miss Lapeer*, the former *Miss Spokane*, won a semi-feature for boats that were unable to qualify for the Gold Cup in Detroit; then Warner Gardner guided it to a win at a new race in Sacramento to close out the '66 season.

Miss Chrysler Crew was a Lauterbach hull powered by twin Chrysler Hemi automotive engines. It was owned by Bill Sterett, who had a winning record in lim-

ited inboard hydroplanes. The boat had numerous breakdowns in its first season, 1966, but the next year things began to gel. At Detroit, Sterett drove the boat to victory in front of its corporate sponsors. The win showed that automotive power could compete with Rolls and Allison engines.

Later that summer, Sterett stepped aside from the *Chrysler Crew* cockpit, and Mira Slovak finished the season in the boat. The 1967 Gold Cup was in Seattle, and on Saturday a Seafair Trophy Race, consisting of two heats, was held. Only a few boats entered, most teams preferring to save their equipment for the Gold Cup. *Miss Chrysler Crew* won both heats easily.

Dave Heerensperger, owner of the *Pay 'N Pak* team, was an innovator. He had a boat with outrigger sponsons, a cabover with twin Chrysler hemi engines, and later the famous "Winged Wonder." When the outrigger boat proved unsuccessful, he ordered a conventional hull with Rolls power, named *Pride of Pay 'N Pak*. The boat made its first appearance at the 1969 Gold Cup in San Diego, driven by Tommy Fults.

The next year the boat was re-named *Pay 'N Pak 'Lil Buzzard*. Fults drove it to victory at the Atomic Cup in Tri-Cities. It turned out to be the only race the boat would win. While attempting to qualify

for the Gold Cup in San Diego, the *Buzzard* hooked and went into a violent spin at low speed. Fults was thrown out and killed.

Perhaps the biggest surprise win during the 1970s occurred at the President's Cup in 1973. George Henley had driven *Lincoln Thrift's 7-1/4% Special* at Miami, but vacated the cockpit after the race. He was replaced by Gene Whipp. A champion inboard driver, Whipp pushed the boat to its limit, perhaps a bit beyond, and won the President's Cup.

It was the only race the boat, and owner Bob Fendler, would win. Whipp resigned as driver, saying he felt it was too dangerous to drive the boat as fast as necessary to try to continue winning. He did assist with testing at a few sites later in the season, but Whipp had no interest in racing Unlimiteds.

Some may feel the 1982 win by the turbine-powered *Pay 'N Pak* at Romulus, New York, was a surprise, but the history of *Pay 'N Pak* boats was filled with victories, and the turbine craft was clearly in the hunt in 1981. It was obvious to most observers that it was just a matter of time until it would win.

Jerry Schoenith bought a new boat from Jon Staudacher in 1983. *Miss Renault* was powered by a turbocharged Allison engine and driven by veteran Milner Irvin. Through most of the season, the boat ran mid-pack. At the final race of the year, the World Championship on Clear Lake near Houston, other boats experienced problems and things came together so *Miss Renault* could claim its only win. Schoenith campaigned the boat again in 1984, but victory proved elusive.

One of the biggest surprise victories in Unlimited history took place in 1986. *Miss Bahia*, an old boat with a round bow and a turbocharged-Allison engine, won at San Diego. Ron Armstrong was the driver who made it happen.

Turbine engines were taking over Unlimited racing in the 1980s, but there was no clear consensus about what the



Rich Ormbrek

Miss Chrysler Crew on Lake Washington in Seattle in 1967.

best engine should be. *Mr. Pringle's* was powered by a marine turbine, as opposed to helicopter turbines used in other boats. Scott Pierce drove Bill Wurster's boat to first place at Detroit. It was the first and only win by a marine turbine.

Piston engines continue to run in Unlimiteds. *Cooper's Express*, the second boat owned by Ed Cooper, Sr., and Ed Cooper, Jr., won at Tri-Cities in 1989. Mitch Evans drove. He would go on to win other races in Ed Cooper's third hull, also with turbo-Allison power, but the

1989 Tri-Cities race was the only win for the second boat.

The 2004 Gold Cup was contested on the Detroit River. It would be the last time a *Miss Budweiser* would compete in the Gold Cup. Penalties and mishaps took a toll on the fleet and Nate Brown, driver of Kim Gregory's *Miss D.Y.C.*, drove a clean race and was awarded the cup. Other owners protested their penalties, to no avail.

Surprise winners are often rare in Unlimited racing. It's too bad that the ex-

pected winner is often a foregone conclusion before qualifying even begins. Those races when an unexpected winner tops the field helps revive flagging interest in fans who feel they've seen it all before.

It has been said that Unlimited racing can be described as hours of boredom punctuated by moments of sheer terror. In the same way, seasons can pass with predictable results, but hold on, every once in a while there's a jaw-dropping surprise. I'm ready for one of those in 2022. ❖

HYDROFILE

Race Team News by Lon Erickson



U-8/U-9 Strong Racing

Work continues at Strong Racing. Trevor Hanson (below) and Jeff Kelly are concentrating on the U-8, Ken Warren (upper right) on the U-9, doing some off-season hull prep. Pat Berryman (lower right) is focused on parts prep in the engine room for upcoming regular turbine maintenance.

Congratulations to U-8 driver J. Michael Kelly. JMK is being inducted for winning the 2021 national driver championship in the Unlimited class. This will be J Michael Kelly's 7th time being inducted into the APBA Hall of Champions. Mike has been inducted in numerous classes of APBA racing throughout his career, this will be his first time as an Unlimited driver for his accomplishments in 2021. He will be honored at the APBA National Meeting in Orlando, FL., January 29, 2022.



Photos by the Strong Racing Team

Bucket List Racing

The BLR team continues to use what they learned in the first season running the U-40 hull. The *Miss Beacon Plumbing* is being fit for new leading edges (below), left and right sides, to add to their inventory of spares. Also, small repairs (right) on the hull are done. Luckily the U-40 made it through the year without too much repair work needed.



Photos by Bucket List Racing



U-11 Unlimited Racing Group

Scott Raney continues work on engines and various running gear, doing winter maintenance on various parts.



Unlimited Racing Group

MY \$0.02 WORTH

Editorial Comment by Andy Muntz



I usually spend a little time on this page expressing my thoughts on various things related to what's happening in the world of unlimited hydroplane racing. Thank you so much for putting up with my ramblings month after month. But this time, I'm doing something slightly different. I'll be talking about you and what you think.

As many of you know, I wear another hat when it comes to this sport. I also serve as one of five people on the board of directors for a nonprofit organization

called the American Boat Racing Association, which you likely know better as H1 Unlimited. I'm just now wrapping up my first year on the board.

I was asked to join that body because I have a background in public relations and strategic planning, so have been involved in developing a long-range plan for the sport. I've provided you with more details about that in past issues of this publication.

One important component of maintaining a strategic plan is to conduct re-

search so that as we take our journey we'll have a better understanding of which direction we should go, what we should expect to find along the way, and whether our efforts are being effective. Toward that end, we did two surveys this past fall.

One was directed to people within the sport—drivers, owners, crew members, and race officials—to get their input about the past season and to offer them an opportunity to provide their comments.

The other survey was aimed at you—the race fans, which is something this sport hasn't done for many years. We wanted to find out what you think of unlimited hydroplane racing and also wanted to gather demographic information about our race fans, which is important to know when approaching potential sponsors and new race sites about getting involved.

A total of 966 people participated in our fan survey, and here's what you told us:

- ◆ Almost half of you said the thing that most appeals to you about unlimited hydroplane racing is that the sport is spectacular to watch. The sport's long tradition was another favorite response.

- ◆ When asked what you'd like to see in the future, almost a third of you said more competitors. The next favorite answer was more race sites.

- ◆ About 64% of you said that you attended at least one of the four races held in 2021. Nearly half of you attended two or more.

- ◆ When you can't attend a race in person, nearly 60% said you watch the streaming broadcast on the H1 Unlimited YouTube channel.

- ◆ About 40% of you get your news about unlimited hydro racing through

Facebook. The H1 website is another popular source. By the way, among publications that cover the sport, the *Unlimited NewsJournal* was mentioned far more than any other.

With regard to demographic information, the following describes the typical unlimited hydroplane racing fan:

- ◆ How old are you? The most common answer was between the ages of 25 to 34, but more than 40% say they are older than 55.

- ◆ How long have you followed the sport? More than half said for more than 30 years.

- ◆ Do you have school-age children at home? Nearly two-thirds said no.

- ◆ What is your gender and race/ethnicity? More than 80% are male and about 92% said they are White/Caucasian.

- ◆ How much education do you have? Nearly half have a bachelor's degree or post-graduate degree.

- ◆ Are you employed? About 55% are employed full time and another 22% are retired.

- ◆ What is your annual household income? About half said their income is between \$50,000 and \$100,000 and about one-third have an income above \$100,000 a year.

- ◆ Where do you live? More than a third said they live in the Pacific Northwest, with the next most common answer being the Midwest/Great Lakes area. Others completed the survey from as far away as New Zealand, Western Europe, and Australia.

And, then there is information about your buying habits:

- ◆ More than 82% of you said you have purchased a product because that company has sponsored a hydroplane.

- ◆ Nearly 60% said you are the person in your household who does most of the shopping and 44% said you make about three-quarters of your purchases in a store and about a quarter online. It's about half and half for another 32%.

- ◆ More than half of you drive a domestic car and about 25% said you own a hybrid or electric-powered vehicle.

- ◆ About 72% of you said you will travel in the next 18 months, 68% will buy an airplane ticket, 81% will stay in a hotel, and 56% will rent a car.

Those taking the survey also left many hundreds of comments on a wide variety of issues. Those results can't be quantified here but, rest assured, all of the comments have been read by the members of the H1 board and are being taken seriously. ❖

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

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