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A Chronicle of Speed

Fans in Tri-Cities and Seattle both get a heck of a show.



Chris Denslow

Andrew Tate in the U-9 *Les Schwab Tires* (left) is side by side with Jimmy Shane in the U-1 *Miss HomeStreet* and the two emerge from the final turn of the final heat in Seattle and make their run for the finish line.

The race for the national title couldn't be closer. Only 354 points separate the top three boats after the first two points-earning races of the 2017 season, indicating how close the competition has been.

Also, while the fields have been smaller this year, with eight boats showing up at both the Tri-Cities and Seattle, more than half of the boats in the pits at each site posed a real chance of winning.

Jimmy Shane in the three-time defending national champion U-1 *Miss HomeStreet* leads the pack by

the narrowest of margins. With a victory in Seattle and a third-place finish in the Tri-Cities, the team has so far earned 3,274 points.

But, only 9 points behind is the U-12 *Graham Trucking*, driven by J. Michael Kelly, who won the race in the Tri-Cities and placed second in Seattle.

Third in the standings is the U-9 *Les Schwab Tires*, driven by last year's Rookie of the Year, Andrew Tate. While Tate has yet to stand on the podium after a race, he has been right in the thick of things and has collected 2,920 points.

Fourth in the standings is a pleasant surprise, the U-11 *Miss DiJulio presents J&D's*. Tom Thompson has thrilled race fans with several deck-to-deck duels and has collected 2,113 points. Another surprise is the U-99.9 *Miss Rock* in fifth place.

Jimmy King and the U-3 *Grigg's Ace Hardware* also turned in a great performance at the Tri-Cities, as did Brian Perkins in the U-21 *Albert Lee Appliance* in Seattle.

Look inside. You'll find our detailed reports for both the Tri-Cities and Seattle events.

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My \$0.02 Worth

Editorial Comment



Andy
Muntz

I had the privilege to do a little work for H1 Unlimited at both the Tri-Cities and Seattle races and, through that experience, gained some valuable insight into a little of the inner workings of what goes on to publicize this sport. I also gained some insight into what some fans seem not to understand.

Both races were spectacular. Although the number of boats was lower than any of us would like, the parity between the boats was greater than it has been for years. More than half of the boats in the pits had a very real chance of winning. What's more, the action on the water reflected that. The fans saw several deck-to-deck battles at both events.

Yet, reading many of the comments in Facebook, one might get the impression that the writers had been watching something entirely different. Many people were so intent on being a critic and so busy looking for signs that the end is at hand that they missed some really positive things on the racecourse.

Look. I get it. I'm not saying that everything is rosy. Having had a hand in H1 Unlimited's publicity effort, I know that everybody involved with the sport realizes that there are many problems desperately looking for solutions. But, I also know that hydroplane racing is not unique in that regard. Just imagine what NASCAR thinks of the fact that only 35,000 fans paid to see this year's Brickyard 400, at a speedway that holds 235,000.

Change is happening, just as it has for centuries.

I recently overheard a conversation in which two people were bemoaning the fact that fewer kids know how to read cursive writing. One of them cited that as an example of how our school system has failed. But I had to ask myself as I listened, do these people light their homes with gas lamps? Do they still add and subtract using an abacus?

My point is, change will always be with us. And, because it's uncertain, change is uncomfortable for many people. We tend not to like the unknown or the unfamiliar.

We prefer that things will always remain the same and that what worked in the past will always work that way in the future.

I've been in the business of media relations for over 40 years. I see every day how market forces have caused the media business to undergo dramatic changes in recent years. I understand why TV stations and newspapers don't cover our sport like they did 50 years ago.

I also know that technology has changed and why the boats use different engines than they once did.

No matter how hard we might wish that the media covered racing like it did in those glorious days in our memory, or that the engines made as much noise, those days are gone and they aren't likely to return. What's more, things will be different 50 years from now than they are today.

The best way for the sport to have a future, therefore, is to not resist the changes that will come, but to embrace them.

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Letters may be edited for clarity and space.

The Unlimited Racing Group launches an innovative non-profit partnership.

Scott and Shannon Raney, the owners of the U-11 unlimited hydroplane, have announced the formation of a non-profit organization called STEMacceleration. Its mission, say the Raney's, is to change the lives of students by providing hands-on STEM inquiry learning opportunities using the power of the extreme sport of unlimited hydroplane racing.

The term STEM stands for the academic disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and math.

The U-11 team started a pilot program last October when they began working with students who were interested in hands-on learning opportunities while working on the U-11 race boat. After several months, the Raney's decided they were making a meaningful difference in how that experience helped students implement what they learned to their school work.

"We started thinking about the program as a pilot and immediately started to brainstorm on how we

could expand this program on a larger scale, explained Shannon Raney.

Why unlimited hydroplane racing? The sport provides participants with the opportunity to learn at the intersection of STEM concepts such as the science of speed generation, the technology of troubleshooting, the engineering of solutions (propulsion systems, electrical systems, rigging design), and the mathematics of computational thinking (measuring tools, impact of gear ratios, and fuel usage).

For more information, contact Shannon Raney at Shannon@u11racing.com. ❖

We love to hear from our readers.

We have unfortunately reached a dangerous life or death precipice for the sport and it is quite possible that unlimited racing may only carry on as a novelty catering to the few. We have to start thinking big picture now.

You have to put a marketable product in place and be able to pimp it to the masses. Production and dissemination. Stick with five races for five years until they actually work and start to pencil out. Quit wasting time and resources pursuing additional sites and markets. The way to expand markets will be done through marketing and delivery of a superior product into the home.

You have to be able to take complete charge of the production of the event. Lots of cameras and live feeds being broadcast on your own streaming channel. If you can produce something worth watching you may be able to attract networks to form partnerships and work with you, but we'll have to do all the initial work ourselves. More media interest will be gained as more people view this amazing sport.

One reality is that if you do not have the right aerial shots, you will never be able to deliver a watchable product. Drones can deliver top-notch video feeds in broadcast quality.

Take control of the entire production. You'll need young and aggressive kids who've never seen a boat in their life, but know how to deliver that story from coast to coast. There is no reason that you can't have instant race results and times posting on the website. And there is no reason why, within five minutes of the completion of a heat, that a press release with results, a picture, a link to the heat video and live blog (hosted on our website) along with a quick story can be sent to 5,000 media writers and outlets, with one click.

Now we'd have a worthy product that would be appealing to new markets and where we could show value to new sponsors and we can try and grow the sport. This is how it needs to be done. It will be costly on many levels, but the hardest obstacle to overcome will be ourselves.

*Bob Schroeter
Boise, Idaho*

Bartush purchases the U-7 from Porter.

Detroit Unlimited Racing owner Dave Bartush has announced the purchase of last year's U-7 *Graham Trucking II* boat from Ted Porter of Decatur, Indiana. Earlier this year, Porter sold his team's other unlimited to Rob Graham, who is now campaigning the boat as the U-12 *Graham Trucking*.

The boat was built as the *Miss Budweiser* in 1997 and during its career has collected 23 race victories and five national titles. It is commonly known as the T-5 hull.

Bartush said the boat will be driven by Bert Henderson, a Canadian Grand Prix champion and a popular boatbuilder. Bill Guckian will serve as the team's crew chief.

The team plans to race the boat only in Detroit this year, but will run the entire circuit in 2018. ❖

Kelly gets redemption in the desert.

Driving a boat that was completely rebuilt, J. Michael Kelly struggled early in the Tri-Cities, then won the final with a start from the outside.

by Andy Muntz

There were several reasons for the huge grin on J. Michael Kelly's face after he drove the U-12 *Graham Trucking* back to the dock following the final heat of the HAPO Columbia Cup. Most obviously, his expression reflected the sheer joy of having just won an unlimited race, never something to be taken for granted. It was also there for the delight of having just rolled the dice on a risky strategy and pulling it off in a dazzling way, the satisfaction of giving his team a victory after they had worked so hard to get the boat ready, and the pride of giving Rob Graham a win the first time he had ever entered a boat in a race as its owner.

But, Kelly is only human, so there also had to be an element of redemption in that smile. That's because a year ago he also went home with the trophy. It was given to him because an official's call meant a penalty to the *Miss HomeStreet* that apparently gave Kelly the win, instead. Five months later, that victory was taken away when the official's decision was overturned.

There are no such clouds on the horizon this year. Kelly won it simply by blowing past the others at the start from the outside, beating them through the first turn, and never looking back. "It's just amazing," he said afterward. "I'm a lucky

guy who gets to go 200 miles per hour on the water."

THERE WERE EIGHT boats in the pit area on Friday morning when the testing got underway. Sharing the area at far end of the pits under the Bernie Tree, so named because it was in the shade of that tree that Bernie Little always wanted his

Budweiser team parked, were the U-11 *Miss DiJulio's presents Miss J&D's* and the U-1 *Miss HomeStreet*. At the other end of the pits, inserted amongst its piston-powered brethren the 5-litres and Grand Prix, was the U-3 *Grigg's Ace Hardware*.

In between were the U-9 *Les Schwab Tires*, the U-12 *Graham*



Chris Denlow



Chris Denlow

[Top] The U-12 *Graham Trucking* was completely rebuilt during the winter and made its first appearance at the Tri-Cities. That meant lots of work for the crew to make the boat race ready. [Above] The Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum ran three boats on the Columbia River. From top to bottom: the newly restored 1973 *Pay 'n Pak*, the 1977 *Atlas Van Lines*, and the 1980 *Miss Budweiser*.

Trucking, the U-21 Darrell Strong presents PayneWest Insurance, the U-99.9 Leland Unlimited Racing presents Carstar powered Miss Rock, and the 440 Bucket List Racing.

There also had been some speculation that the Ellstrom family would take their U-16 to the Tri-Cities, as the racecourse has been remarkably kind to them. Their boats have been the fastest qualifier 10 out of the last 12 years. But, the team decided they would make their season debut at Seattle, instead. "The boat is ready, the team is ready, and we will do our best to put Oberto back in the winner's circle at Seattle," said Erick Ellstrom.

Two teams took as much advantage of the testing time as they could. Kelly was out several times in the *Graham Trucking*. After being purchased by long-time sponsor Rob Graham, the boat was entirely rebuilt during the off-season and had not yet been in the water to get things dialed in. One frustration, for example, was that the boat was somehow taking on water. Each time it returned from a run, about 300 pounds of the Columbia River would have to be drained from inside the hull.

Also getting on the course as often as possible was Dustin Echols and the *Bucket List Racing*. A smaller hull than the others and powered by a smaller turbine engine than the others, the boat has been in the Tri-Cities four out of the last five years, but has never been able to get past a series of gear box issues.

That problem seemed to be solved this year, but it instead was plagued with handling issues, especially in rough water. Echols took the boat around the course at an impressive 141 mph, but then it did a hop, skip and a jump when it hit a swell in the first turn. After limping back to the pits, the team found that a huge crack had formed



Chris Denstow



Lon Erickson



Chris Denstow

[Top] The 440 *Bucket List* suffered hull damage on Friday when it caught a wake and spun out. The transom end of the sponson was separated from the hull. [Middle] The crew worked most of that night to repair the boat and it was back out on the course the next morning. [Above] From the left, the U-3 *Grigg's Ace Hardware*, the U-11 *Miss DiJulio presents J&D's*, and the U-12 *Graham Trucking* stayed within a roostertail's length of each other throughout Heat 2A.



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow



Lon Erickson

[Top] Brian Perkins in the U-21 *Miss PayneWest Insurance* and Jimmy Shane in the *Miss HomeStreet* were side by side heading into the first turn in Heat 1A. [Middle] As the *PayneWest* entered the second turn in lap two, the boat suddenly lost its prop and rudder and went into a wild spin. [Above] The Allison-powered U-3 *Grigg's Ace Hardware* with Jimmy King at the wheel.

between the transom end of the sponson and the center section of the hull.

Meanwhile, when qualifying got underway, Tom Thompson was the first to get on the board with a run of almost 154 mph in the *Miss J&D's*. Andrew Tate would later make a couple of runs in the *Les Schwab* of over 160 miles per hour, but the faster one was disallowed because of an N2 violation. His other run, though it also had an N2 violation, was allowed to stick along with a \$200 fine. Jimmy Shane in *Miss HomeStreet* was the second fastest qualifier with a run of just over 154 mph.

When the course was closed on Friday afternoon, six boats were in the field and only 7.2 miles per hour separated the fastest qualifier from the slowest. The *Miss Rock* never made it off its trailer as the crew struggled with engine issues and, as the other teams went back to their hotels for the night, the *Bucket List Racing* boat had been placed on barrels so as to make it easier for the team members to fix their hull, a job that went well into the night.

SATURDAY DAWNED sunny and warm, as is typical for the desert climate of the Tri-Cities. First to make it out onto the Columbia River course was Echols in the *Bucket List Racing*, the boat obviously repaired and ready to go. Echols also needed laps in order to become a qualified driver, so he took the boat around the course seven times and turned in lap speeds of over 140 mph each time.

Greg Hopp also attempted to get the *Miss Rock* onto the race-course for a test run, but the engine wouldn't spool-up. The boat just plowed its way through the water until Hopp finally saw that it was not going to get onto a plane. It and the *Bucket List* boat were drawn into

the first set of preliminary heats anyway.

Bucket List was drawn into Heat 1A, in fact, along with *Miss HomeStreet*, *Graham Trucking*, and *PayneWest Insurance*. In preparing for the start, however, the *Bucket List* hit another patch of rough water in the same turn where it had the issue the day before. Echols said it just dug into the water and spun out. The accident left debris on the course, which caused the black flags to fly and the race to be stopped before it had started.

Heat 1B featured the *Grigg's Ace Hardware*, *Les Schwab Tires*, *Miss J&D's*, and *Miss Rock*. This time, Hopp successfully got his boat onto the course and the boat stayed running to the end. Thompson in the *Miss J&D's* took the inside lane and led at the start, but was passed by Tate in the *Les Schwab* during the second lap. The boats finished in that order, with *Les Schwab* taking first, *Miss J&D's* second, *Grigg's Ace Hardware* third, and *Miss Rock* fourth.

Later in the day, race officials announced that the *Miss J&D's* was disqualified because of a fuel-flow violation. Team owner Scott Raney protested the call, saying the fuel flow on his boat was calibrated to be within limits, and claimed the monitor was not accurate. To test it, both the offending monitor and another were installed in the boat the following day and, sure enough, the one monitor did indeed show a faulty reading. As a result, the disqualification was rescinded.

In the restart of Heat 1A, Shane grabbed the inside lane at the start from Brian Perkins in the *PayneWest Insurance*, while Kelly in the *Graham Trucking* started on the outside. Perkins was in the lead heading into the first turn, but Shane soon passed him and by the time the boats were going down the



Lon Erickson



Chris Denslow



Craig Barney

[Top] From the left, the U-99.9 *Miss Rock*, the U-11 *Miss J&D's*, and the U-9 *Les Schwab Tires* leave the dock and head onto the Columbia River racecourse. [Middle] Andrew Tate in the *Les Schwab* (left) battled side to side with Tom Thompson in *Miss J&D's* in both Heat 3A and Heat 4B. [Above] Dustin Echols brings the 440 *Bucket List* back to the dock.

Lon Erickson



Chris Denslow



[Top] The U-11 Miss J&D's team operated from beneath the Bernie Tree, so named because it was the place where Bernie Little's Miss Budweiser team was always camped. [Above] Jimmy King has the inside lane on J. Michael Kelly going through the turn.

backstretch during the second lap, he was leading by the length of a roostertail.

As the PayneWest entered the final turn before completing the second lap, the boat suddenly went into a wild spin that threw spray high into the air and caused the boat to cut to its left and off of the racecourse. On its way, however, it went right into the path of the Graham Trucking that was behind and to the inside. Kelly immediately turned his boat to the right to avoid a collision and was able to continue on.

It was later determined that a propeller blade on the PayneWest Insurance had broken off, which took out a chunk of the transom and created such a violent vibration that it tore the prop strut from the bottom

of the boat and caused the whole prop and prop shaft assembly to swing violently to starboard and take out the rudder. Perkins,

meanwhile, banged his knee on the steering column, but was otherwise unhurt.

Damage to the boat was severe enough that it was done for the weekend. By the time crews arrived the next morning, the PayneWest Insurance had already been taken back across the Cascade Mountains to its shop in Maple Valley, Washington.

As for the race, Shane cruised to an easy victory, with Kelly far behind and taking second place honors.

In Heat 2A, Thompson in the Miss J&D's grabbed the inside lane at the start, but Kelly passed him on the outside going into the first turn while Jimmy King in the Grigg's Ace Hardware was third. The three boats stayed within a roostertail of each other throughout the race, but Kelly stayed in the lead to the end.

The two winners of the first set of preliminary heats faced each other in the day's final race, Heat 2B, and the two didn't disappoint the large crowd watching.

Shane managed to get the inside lane on Tate at the start and that's what made the difference. Though the two raced virtually side by side for four laps, Shane was able to hold Tate to his outside and take care of that advantage. He crossed



In the final heat, J. Michael Kelly started from the outside in the U-12 Graham Trucking, passed the field in the first turn, and led to the finish to win the HAPO Columbia Cup.

Lon Erickson

the finish line about a roostertail's length ahead of Tate while Hopp in the *Miss Rock* finished a distant third.

THE FINAL DAY of racing action on the Columbia River featured two sets of preliminary heats and an exciting final heat, all played out before a large crowd of spectators along the shore who were soaking up sunshine that would have temperatures in the upper 90s by late afternoon.

The day got underway with a great heat of racing between Tate in the *Les Schwab* and Thompson in *Miss J&D's*. Thompson grabbed the inside lane at the start, with Tate beside him and King in the *Grigg's Ace Hardware* on the outside. Thompson led going into the first turn and actually turned in a lap of more than 154 mph, the fastest competition lap of the event, during its first time around the course. But, Tate stayed right with him. Though Thompson held the inside lane throughout, Tate remained immediately to his outside and managed the boat speed necessary to maintain a narrow lead to the finish line. King finished third and Hopp in the *Miss Rock* was fourth.

The winner of the day's second preliminary heat was essentially settled before the boats even started. In preparing for the start, Kelly cut across the bow of the *HomeStreet* and was assessed a one-minute penalty for encroachment. It was later rescinded, but that didn't really matter. Shane took the inside lane at the start, pulled ahead of Kelly, and went on to an easy victory. A third boat in the heat, the *Bucket List*, was far behind the other two and once again spun out in a turn before it could finish.

In the second round of preliminaries, King took the inside lane at the start of Heat 4A in his *Grigg's Ace Hardware*, but Kelly soon passed

STATBOX

HAPO COLUMBIA CUP

Tri-Cities, Washington

July 29-30, 2017

2.5-mile course on the Columbia River

QUALIFYING (1) U-9 *Les Schwab Tires*, Andrew Tate, 160.702, 100 points; (2) U-1 *Miss HomeStreet*, Jimmy Shane, 157.114, 80; (3) U-12 *Graham Trucking*, J. Michael Kelly, 154.713, 70; (4) U-3 *Grigg's Ace Hardware*, Jimmy King, 154.091, 60; (5) U-11 *Miss DiJulio presents J&D's*, Tom Thompson, 153.885, 50; (6) U-21 *Darrell Strong presents PayneWest Insurance*, Brian Perkins, 153.560, 40; U-440 *Bucket List Racing*, Dustin Echols, DNQ — engine problems, 0 (used 145.834 test speed to enter race); U-99.9 *Leland Unlimited Racing presents Carstar-powered Miss Rock*, Greg Hopp, DNQ — engine problems, 0 (Chairman's Option).

HEAT 1A (rerun) (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 141.427, 400 points, 480 cumulative points; (2) *Graham Trucking* 120.536, 300, 370; *PayneWest Insurance* DNF — hooked damaging hull, 0, 40; *Bucket List* DSQ — died in first turn prior to start creating dangerous situation stopping start in first running, 0, 0. Fast lap (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 148.920.

HEAT 1B (1) *Les Schwab Tires* 145.843 400, 500; (2) *Miss J&D's* 139.487, 300, 350; (3) *Ace Hardware* 136.573, 225, 285; (4) *Miss Rock* 123.418, 169, 169. Fast lap (2) *Les Schwab Tires* 150.200.

HEAT 2A (1) *Graham Trucking* 147.786, 400, 770; (2) *Miss J&D's* 142.116, 300, 650; (3) *Ace Hardware* 138.782, 225, 510; *Bucket List* DNS — repairing hull damage, 0, 0. Fast lap (3) *Graham Trucking* 149.578.

HEAT 2B (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 149.655, 400, 880; (2) *Les Schwab Tires* 148.891, 300, 800; (3) *Miss Rock* 129.572, 225, 394; *PayneWest Insurance* WD — hull damage, 0, 40. Fast lap (3) *Miss HomeStreet* 152.785.

HEAT 3A (1) *Les Schwab Tires* 151.412, 400, 1200; (2) *Miss J&D's* 149.975, 300, 950; (3) *Ace Hardware* 146.835, 225, 735; (4) *Miss Rock* 131.125, 169, 563. Fast lap (1) *Miss J&D's* 154.297. **HEAT 3B** (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 146.920, 400, 1280; (2) *Graham Trucking* 144.475, 300, 1070; *Bucket List* DNF — spun out, 0, 0. Fast lap (2) *Miss HomeStreet* 148.922.

HEAT 4A (1) *Ace Hardware* 147.861, 400, 1135; (2) *Miss HomeStreet* 145.815, 300, 1580; (3) *Graham Trucking* 119.866 (penalized one minute for jumping the gun), 225, 1295; *Bucket List* DNS — ?, 0, 0. Fast lap (2) *Graham Trucking* 151.423.

HEAT 4B (1) *Les Schwab Tires* 132.625, 400, 1600; (2) *Miss J&D's* 132.101, 300, 1250; (3) *Miss Rock* 119.966, 225, 788. Fast lap (1) *Les Schwab Tires* 135.078.

FINAL (1) *Graham Trucking* 148.087, 400, 1695; (2) *Ace Hardware* 144.446, 300, 1435; (3) *Miss HomeStreet* 142.301, 225, 1805; (4) *Les Schwab Tires* 141.791, 169, 1769; (5) *Miss Rock* 127.288, 127, 915; *Miss J&D's* DNF — lost power, driver felt vibration shut off, 0, 1250. Fast lap (3) *Graham Trucking* 150.318.

COMPILED BY ALLEN STILES

him in the *Graham Trucking* and went into the lead with Shane following behind in the *Miss HomeStreet*. That's when it was announced that Kelly had jumped gun, forcing him to run an extra lap. As a result, King won the heat while Shane took second and Kelly finished third.

Heat 4B was a repeat of 3A, with Thompson in *Miss J&D's* and Tate in *Les Schwab* again battling it out side by side through the entire run. This time, however, it was Tate holding the inside lane. The two were never more than a boat length apart and it was Tate who got across the finish line first. Hopp in the *Miss Rock* finished third.

That set the stage for the winner-take-all final heat.

Before the race, Kelly met with Tom Anderson, his team's crew chief, to develop their strategy for the race. All during the weekend they had been going back and forth with engines and had been fighting the issue of water getting into the hull. They felt they had solved the problem and felt they had a good combo for the final, though what the team had done wasn't completely shared with their driver.

"It was a shiny thing sitting in the truck," Kelly answered when asked what had been done to make the boat faster. "My crew chief and owner didn't really talk. They said you really should go faster this heat."

Anderson and Kelly decided on a strategy where they would start from the outside and not get caught up in the battle the others would have for the inside lane. It worked like a charm.

As the boats prepared for the start of the final heat, King in the *Grigg's Ace Hardware* cut through the course and managed to grab the inside lane from the others, typically the most advantageous place to be at the start of a hydro-



J. Michael Kelly shares the stage with his two boys as he accepts the winning trophy

Chris Denlow

plane race. Tate was next to him in lane two and outside of him was Shane in lane three. But, as they crossed the starting line, Kelly came flying past the others on the outside, kept his lead rounding the first turn, and pulled away heading down the backstretch.

"We hung back," he explained. "You never know what's going to happen. I started from the outside, led them going into the first turn, and never looked back. I know that I was going to be rolling by them, but usually those guys can make up that going slow on the inside. I proved that I could do it earlier in the day. I just had too much speed going and was able to get through that first turn clean, because usually it's really sloppy."

The slop got Tate. As he tried to make his way through the first turn between the wall of roostertail on his left caused by *Grigg's Ace Hardware* and the one on his right caused by *Miss HomeStreet*, he couldn't help but collide with the waterfall on his left. The result caused him to lose speed and left him behind in fourth place while King and Shane battled for second place and Kelly pulled away to a commanding lead.

"I got through there clean and

was able to slowly close it down," Kelly said. "That's pretty cool to win from the outside, especially when we've been trying to find speed all week long."

Behind him, King managed to hold the inside lane, kept Shane to his outside throughout the heat, and got to the finish line in second place. Tate finished in fourth place and in fifth was the *Miss Rock*. Thompson felt the *Miss J&D's* suddenly loose power so shut the engine down before any damage could occur and did not finish.

"It worked out good," Kelly said. "I mean, it just shows the dedication that these guys [his crew] have, not giving up throughout the entire weekend. I mean, 100-degree weather on top of that boat. Never stopping. Giving me the best boat that they can. I'm just the lucky guy who gets to sit in that cockpit and race."

The victory in the Tri-Cities was the ninth for J. Michael Kelly and the 24th in the career of the boat, which started racing in 2000 as the *Miss Budweiser* and has earned three national championships. "We brought this *Bud* boat back to its glory days and it definitely showed," Kelly said, "so she's got some life left in her." ❖

Shane buoyed by Seafair win.

Andrew Tate won the drag race to the finish line, but Jimmy Shane got the trophy, thanks to a buoy that went flying before the start.

by Dick Sanders

How exciting was the 2017 Albert Lee Appliance Cup final heat? At the awards presentation, no one in the assembled media asked, and race winner Jimmy Shane did not volunteer, if and when he was told by his spotter that Andrew Tate had dislodged a buoy during the pre-race warm-up and that a penalty, though not announced yet, was probable. No one seemed to want to break the spell, the magic of a five-lap duel for the ages.

The previous week at the Tri-Cities, boat count was the elephant in the room. Early attrition whittled an already anemic

eight-boat fleet down to six, leaving several three-boat preliminary heats for fans used to seeing six-wide starts. Waiting in Seattle were fans unhappy that for the first time in 66 years, no local TV stations would broadcast Sunday's racing live.

One team, Ed Cooper's popular piston-packer U-3, travelled all the way to Washington state for the Tri-Cities race, picking up a solid second-place finish, but left for home immediately afterward with unspecified damage. In a roughly fair trade-off, the Ellstrom team and their ultra-fast hull would make its first appearance of the year, with veteran J.W. Myers returning to the cockpit after a five-year absence.

Add to that the smoke. Huge, out-of-control fires in nearby British Columbia had consumed over 2,000 square miles of forest by the week prior to Seafair. Northern winds pushed the smoke south, leaving Seattle's normal "bluest skies you've ever seen" more reminiscent of Beijing and gained notoriety as having the unhealthiest air to breathe in the U.S. A shift in the wind caused the thick brownish haze to let up a little Friday and Saturday, but a slight northern breeze returned Sunday to increase the haze once again.

Fighting haze, a small field of unlimiteds, diminished media attention, and a gloomy local fan base, Seafair desperately needed a controversy-free, competitive weekend of racing. With the exception of a post-race squabble over a wayward buoy that handed the Albert Lee Appliance Cup to Jimmy Shane and the Homestreet team, most of their wishes were fulfilled.

FIVE TEAMS POSTED qualifying speeds on Lake Washington's 2-mile course on Friday. J.W. Myers accumulated the last of his required 15 laps to re-qualify as a driver. He succinctly compared the ride of U-16 *OH BOY! Oberto*, the newest hull on the circuit and often the fastest qualifier, with previous hulls he'd driven. "It gets busy quicker."



Lon Erickson

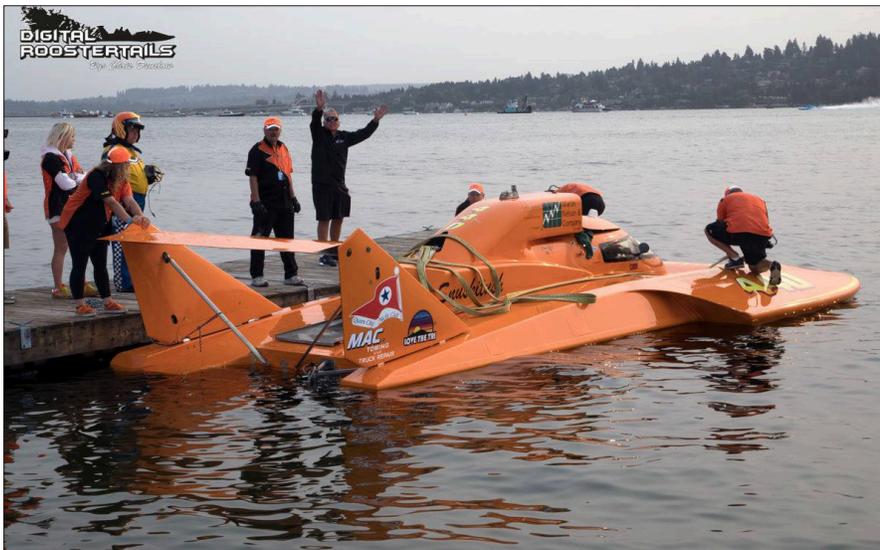
Jimmy Shane sits atop the cowl of the U-1 *Miss HomeStreet*.



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow

[Top] Andrew Tate brings the U-9 Les Schwab Tires back to the pits after a test run on Lake Washington. [Middle] The crew of the U-21 *Albert Lee Appliance* worked day and night to repair the damage that happened to the boat the weekend before in the Tri-Cities and arrived in the pits late on Friday afternoon. [Above] The 440 *Bucket List Racing* is prepared for a test run.

Myers managed a lap of 134.208 mph with obvious untapped potential. Towards the end of qualifying there was a flurry of activity to get the top speed and a smidgeon of points. Jimmy Shane in U-1 *Miss HomeStreet* grabbed top honors with a lap of 148.975 mph, closely followed by Andrew Tate in the U-9 *Les Schwab Tires* at 148.355 mph and J. Michael Kelly in the U-12 *Graham Trucking* at 146.100 mph.

Brian Perkins was Friday's other qualifier in the U-21 *Albert Lee Appliance*, but had his speed and points taken away by a technical violation. As qualifying ended Friday, there were still three unqualified boats. The U-11 team seemed likely to make the show, but the other two non-qualifiers were more problematic.

The U-99.9 team had cooked one of its two engines in Tri-Cities. After cobbling together a runnable engine from the remaining parts, Greg Hopp ran a smoke-filled lap Friday and returned to the pits looking for answers. The 440 *Bucket List* team bent a prop blade in testing, then lost a prop and shaft on their first qualifying attempt, luckily with no damage to the hull. These were the second and third props lost in two weeks. Crewmembers said they had no more spares. A repeat of the previous week's six-boat field was a distinct possibility.

But on Saturday morning, the fates took a turn for the better. Tom Thompson in *Miss DiJulio presents J&D's* and Hopp in *KISW Miss Rock powered by Carstar* both posted decent qualifying speeds, while the *Bucket List* team apparently found a fourth propeller under a sofa cushion. Dustin Echols in the *Bucket List* ran a slow test lap, taking a Commissioner's Option.

HEAT 1A SAW Kelly's red *Graham Trucking* get the first of two favorable draws. Echols' *Bucket List* showed good speed at the start from the outside lane, but *Graham* in lane three flew by everyone as they entered the first turn. Perkins used lane one to take the early advantage coming out of the turn, but was passed by Kelly in the *Graham* and Thompson in *Miss J&D's* up the backstretch.

Kelly slowly opened up a lead, but Thompson stayed within a roostertail throughout, preventing Kelly from getting overlap. At the apex of the final turn, the *Graham* fell into a hole, launched, and briefly unhooked. Thompson saw his chance and pulled even at the exit pin. Kelly won an exciting drag race to the wire by just a boat length.

Shane, in lane one, held off a strong, one-and-a-half lap challenge from Tate and went on to an apparent victory in Heat 1B, only to be informed by officials that he had incurred an "under-80 mph" penalty in the score-up before the start. That moved him down to fourth. Starting by rule from the outside, returning veteran Myers was still feeling out the *Oberto* and settled for third behind Hopp in the *Miss Rock*.

KELLY DROVE *Graham Trucking* to his second consecutive heat win in Heat 2A. Myers was growing more confident with his ride and duelled with Perkins for two laps, driving around the *Albert Lee* to take second in *Oberto*. Hopp trailed throughout in the *Miss Rock*.

Heat 2B was pretty much a cakewalk for Shane in *HomeStreet*. Tate, in lane one, was early at the start and slowed, allowing Shane to zoom by and build a roostertail lead on the first backstretch that he wouldn't surrender. Thompson in



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow

[Top] Andrew Tate (left) and J. Michael Kelly share a ride to the autograph session. [Middle] In Heat 1A, J. Michael Kelly in the U-12 *Graham Trucking* (left) battles Tom Thompson in the *Miss J&D's*. [Above] JW Myers was at the controls of the U-16 *OH BOY! Oberto* in the boat's first 2017 appearance.



Chris Denlow

The U-16 OH BOY! Oberto and the U-99.9 KISW Miss Rock.

Miss J&D's battled Tate through-out, with Tate in *Les Schwab* taking second by half a 'tail. Echols in the *Bucket List* was a slow fourth.

THE ACTION STARTED at noon on Sunday. Shane in *HomeStreet* started off the day right with an easy win in Heat 3A. Thompson grabbed lane one, but at the cost of being way too early, jumping the gun and ended up in fourth place. The field spread out after a lap, Perkins took second and Hopp third.

In Heat 3B, it was rookie Echols' turn to shine, if only briefly, as the orange *Bucket List* hit the line perfectly in lane four and led the field to the first turn. It was Kelly in *Graham Trucking*, though, who led the field out of the first turn in lane one, quickly opening up a rooster-tail lead on Tate and Myers, who were both late at the start.

Myers, again stepping up his performance in *Oberto*, dueled with Tate for a lap before the *Les Schwab* boat pulled away to take second place. Echols finished a distant fourth, his third completed heat of the weekend. Even though they would be the only team without enough points to make the final, it was still a victory for a team that in

the past had rarely come back to the dock under its own power.

Smoke on the Water

THE NORTHERN breezes carrying Canadian forest-fire smoke and soot increased during the four-hour break between 3B and the final, leading to a public address announcement that the starts of the supporting class heats were being moved up, suggesting a forecast of stronger winds to come. But just as

quickly, the winds tailed off before the final heat. With eight boats in the pits, only Echols was left on the beach. *Miss Rock* and *Miss J&D's* were tied for sixth-place points. *Miss Rock* would be the trailer by virtue of a slower qualifying speed.

It was half-way into the five-minute warm-up period that the race would ultimately be decided. Thompson and Tate, nearing the end of the front stretch, both cut the course, Tate behind but on the inside. Footage from the U-9's tail-mounted camera would later show that as the two boats neared the opposite buoy on the backstretch (the first buoy after the exit pin), Tate turned the *Les Schwab* left across heavy rollers and slightly hooked at the most inopportune time. The U-9's canard cleanly sheared the anchor cable of the buoy and bounced it skyward. This is where things got tricky.

Turn judges in the nearest patrol boat and many on the shore saw the buoy fly 20 feet in the air. Officials on shore and in the helicopter apparently did not. Part of the reason for that was that the buoy had shot straight up and landed back down intact and in its



Chris Denlow

Tom Thompson, driver of the U-11 *Miss J&D's*, has a discussion with his team's owners, Scott and Shannon Raney

original position. Not uncommon in racing, the turn judges called in the penalty as the heat ended. But several minutes earlier, as the drivers scored up for the start, no one knew for sure what the final call by the officials would be. The race was on!

Approaching the one-minute gun, the time for optimum course-cutting to grab an inside lane was at its peak. The previous week on the Columbia River, three drivers scored up for the start and had to slow down, allowing Kelly in *Graham Trucking* to charge by and gain an unlikely race victory from lane four.

Kelly tried to put himself in the same spot on the course on Lake Washington, hoping for aggressive course cutters, but no one was biting. Instead, the field formed up together early on the backstretch with Kelly in the same lane four, but no timing advantage over his inside rivals. For the third time in four heats, Perkins snagged lane one in *Albert Lee*. Shane's *HomeStreet* was in lane two, then Tate's *Les Schwab* in lane three, followed by Kelly, Thompson in *Miss J&D's*, and Myers in the *Oberto* on the outside.

It was a magnificent charge to the first turn, Kelly leading the pack. Just before the exit pin, Perkins held the briefest of leads in lane one until Shane, Tate, and Kelly shot by him in a mad dash up the backstretch. Shane used his inside position to gain a slight edge through the second turn, Tate sandwiched between him and Kelly. But it was still anyone's race at the end of lap one.

After another lap, Kelly began to fall back, but Tate stayed within a roostertail of Shane. The rest of the field spread out. On the third lap, Tate began picking up the pace.



Craig Barney



Chris Denstow



Craig Barney

[Top] The Miss HomeStreet team prepares their boat for a run on Lake Washington. [Middle] Tom Thompson stands on the deck of the *Miss J&D's*. [Above] J. Michael Kelly pilots the U-12 *Graham Trucking* onto the course.

STATBOX

ALBERT LEE APPLIANCE SEAFAIR CUP

Seattle, Washington

August 5-6, 2017

2-mile course on Lake Washington

QUALIFICATION (1) U-1 *Miss HomeStreet*, Jimmy Shane, 148.975, 100 points; (2) U-9 *Les Schwab Tires*, Andrew Tate, 148.355, 80; (3) U-12 *Graham Trucking*, J. Michael Kelly, 146.100, 70; (4) U-16 *OH BOY! Oberto*, JW Myers, 134.208, 60; (5) U-21 *Albert Lee Appliance*, Brian Perkins, technical violation, 0; U-11 *Miss DiJulio's presents J&D's*, Tom Thompson, DNQ — mechanical problem, 0 (used test speed 140.285 to enter the race); U-99.9 *KISW Miss Rock powered by Carstar*, Greg Hopp, DNQ — mechanical problem, 0 (used test speed 131.116 to enter the race); U-440 *Bucket List Racing*, Dustin Echols, DNQ — lost propeller on qualifying attempt, 0 (Chairman's Option).

HEAT 1A (1) *Graham Trucking* 137.853, 400 points, 470 cumulative points; (2) *Miss J&D's* 137.552, 300, 300; (3) *Albert Lee Appliance* 122.966, 225, 225; (4) *Bucket List* 93.998, 169, 169. Fast Lap (3) *Miss J&D's* 141.576.

HEAT 1B (1) *Les Schwab Tires* 132.258, 400, 480; (2) *KISW Miss Rock* 122.901, 300, 300; (3) *OH BOY! Oberto* 117.688, 225, 285; (4) *Miss HomeStreet* 98.906 (penalized one minute for running under 80 mph prior to the start), 169, 269. Fast Lap (2) *Miss HomeStreet* 138.224.

HEAT 2A (1) *Graham Trucking* 136.656, 400, 870; (2) *OH BOY! Oberto* 130.783, 300, 585; (3) *Albert Lee Appliance* 129.000, 225, 450; *KISW Miss Rock* 113.678, 169, 469. Fast lap (2) *Graham Trucking* 140.113.

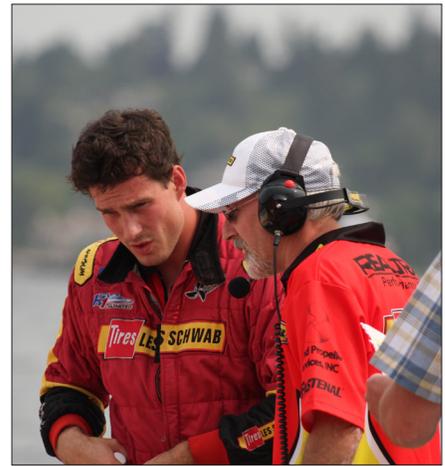
HEAT 2B (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 137.840, 400, 669; (2) *Les Schwab Tires* 133.135, 300, 780; (3) *Miss J&D's* 131.092, 225, 525; (4) *Bucket List* 89.746, 169, 338. Fast lap (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 140.496.

HEAT 3A (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 136.845, 400, 1069; (2) *Albert Lee Appliance* 126.413, 300, 750; (3) *KISW Miss Rock* 122.433, 225, 694; (4) *Miss J&D's* 95.793 (penalized one minute for jumping the gun), 169, 694.. Fast lap (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 139.394.

HEAT 3B (1) *Graham Trucking* 135.057, 400, 1270; (2) *Les Schwab Tires* 130.672, 300, 1080; (3) *OH BOY! Oberto* 129.040, 225, 810; (4) *Bucket List* 102.913, 169, 507. Fast lap (2) *Les Schwab Tires* 138.142.

FINAL (1) *Miss HomeStreet* 138.482, 400, 1469; (2) *Graham Trucking* 131.088, 300, 1570; (3) *Albert Lee Appliance* 127.884, 225, 975; (4) *Miss J&D's* 123.809, 169, 863; (5) *OH BOY! Oberto* 121.680, 127, 937; (6) *KISW Miss Rock* 114.542, 95, 789; (7) *Les Schwab Tires* 112.755 (penalized one minute for dislodging a buoy prior to the start), 71, 1151. Fast lap (5) *Les Schwab Tires* 144.274.

COMPILED BY ALLEN STILES



Lon Erickson

Andrew Tate confers with his crew chief, Jeff Campbell.

Entering the first turn of lap three, Kelly made his own last, desperate attempt to catch up with the leaders, veering *Graham* into lane one, but made up little ground.

The bright blue *Homestreet* seemed to be catching bad bounces in lane one on the churned-up lake, and Tate took advantage, steadily closing the gap on lap four. Tate made his move at the beginning of the final lap, pulling the *Les Schwab* boat alongside *Homestreet* entering the first turn.

Coming off the exit pin, Tate's ride showed an astounding burst of acceleration, pulling two boat-lengths ahead of Shane. They stayed that way up a frantic backstretch run into the final turn. Shane made up a boat length on the inside. Both flew their boats, sponsons waving, from the exit pin all the way to the checkered flag, with Tate narrowly holding on for an apparent second win in two years at Seafair.

But, it was not to be.

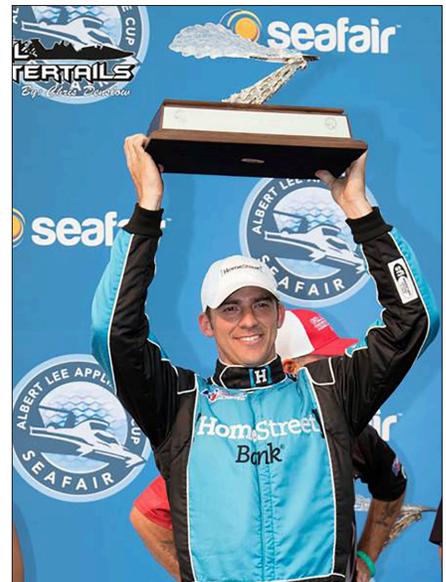
After the dislodged buoy was called in, officials initially announced a disqualification of the *Les Schwab*, but several minutes later changed it to a one-minute penalty. Almost as quickly, the U-9 team protested, alleging that Tate had been forced into the buoy by Thompson in *Miss J&D's*.



H1 Unlimited



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow

[Top] The moment that determined the outcome of the race. The GoPro camera on the wing of the U-9 *Les Schwab Tires* catches the dislodged buoy as it goes flying to the left. That's the U-11 *Miss J&D's* in the distance to the right.

[Above] Andrew Tate surged ahead of the *Miss HomeStreet* going down the backstretch during the final lap. [Right] Jimmy Shane hoists the winner's trophy.

Back at the dock, there was confusion. After the last of the boats had returned to the pits, the turn judges who had made the call quickly returned to shore and huddled with the referees under the Union 76 ball. Fifteen minutes after the heat ended, the official call was confirmed: Tate had dislodged the buoy. Thompson had left room for Tate.

Shane and *HomeStreet* were declared the winner of the 2017 Albert Lee Appliance Cup. Kelly was awarded second place, Perkins earned a podium finish in third place.

In the end, just about everything with the unlimiteds went

right for Seafair and H1 in Seattle. Every boat started its assigned heat and every boat that started a heat finished it. There was good competition in more than half the heats and the final heat was exceptional. Though Sunday's crowd appeared slightly down in number

from past years, it was nowhere near the catastrophe some had predicted.

The fleet, such as it is, moves on to Detroit and its two races next. Certain is that Hydrofest organizers are hoping, praying for the same good luck that Seafair had. ❖

Late-breaking news from Detroit.

Jimmy Shane and Andrew Tate both came away from the Metro Detroit Chevy Dealers Hydrofest as winners. On Saturday, Tate drove the U-9 *Delta Realtrac* to victory in the President's Cup race while J. Michael Kelly finished second in the U-12 *Graham Trucking*. On Sunday, Shane drove the U-1 *Miss HomeStreet* to victory in the Gold Cup while Tate finished second. With only the San Diego race remaining in the season, Shane leads the race to defend his national title with 5,979 points. Tate is close behind with 5,700 points and Kelly is third with 5,385 points. Full details of the Detroit races will be published in the October issue of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*.

Around the Circuit

Race Site News



Chris Tracy

A Tale of Two Races: Tri-Cities and Seattle

The first official race of the season, the HAPO Columbia Cup, was held in the Tri-Cities (Kennewick, Pasco, Richland) the last weekend in July. With only eight unlimited hydroplanes attending, some worried about the quality of the race.

For most folks, the event exceeded all expectations as the racing on the water was great. The Tri-City Water Follies operates a first-class venue. Parking is great and inexpensive, weather is good—although a bit warmer this year—and the natural layout of the venue is pretty much perfect for watching races. And, the Tri-City Water Follies operates like a top-tier hydroplane team and all was ready for the boats to run.

Again this year, the HAPO Columbia Cup operated a modified Gold Cup format, with an extra heat (4A and 4B) and four-lap preliminary heats, with a five-lap final. HAPO pays more to H1 Unlimited in exchange for more racing. But, there was much more racing, with the 5-litres, Grand Prix racing, the vintage unlimited boats running, and a good air show. There was little down time.

KONA Radio provided excellent play-by-play all weekend and KNDU TV provided great streaming and live TV, too, on Sunday. The *Tri-City Herald* newspaper had comprehensive coverage. The Tri-Cities venue is the model all others should emulate. The race even offers teams a little more money if boats run in the Dash For Cash on Friday, which is broadcast live during the evening news on KNDU TV. U-1 *Home-*

Street and U-21 *PayneWest Insurance* participated in the Dash For Cash. (One has to wonder why the U-9 *Les Schwab* or the U-3 *Grigg's Ace Hardware* did not, as their local sponsors would have received great publicity.)

The race was well attended. Lots of fans come from around the Northwest to watch this race. Over 60, mostly out-of-towners, gathered for the Royal Order of the Turbine banquet at Kennewick's CQ Public House on Saturday evening. H1 Chairman Doug Bernstein spoke briefly to the group. My wife counted 38 folks she knew were from the Seattle area having dinner at Sterlings Restaurant in downtown Richland after the race on Sunday night, and there are lots of restaurants in the Tri-Cities, which has a population of over 200,000.

Dues for Unlimiteds Unanimous.

Many thanks to those of you who have donated to Unlimiteds Unanimous (UU), the organization that publishes this publication.

In years past, when the *Unlimited NewsJournal* was mailed to subscribers, the cost of a UU membership covered the expenses. But, that revenue stream went away when we decided to put the publication on the Internet and make it available for free. There are still costs, though, such as software updates and the cost of the web hosting service.

With our most recent renewal of our web hosting service, the club's cash reserves dipped to a point where the club leadership believes that it's time to ask our readers to help replenish the bank

account. So, here's our proposal: If you enjoy reading the *Unlimited NewsJournal*, please consider making a one-time financial contribution.

While donations for membership will be accepted in any amount, we suggest the following dues structure, based on hydroplane classes:

Limited Membership ... \$10

Vintage Membership ... \$20

Unlimited Membership ... \$30

Thank you for your consideration. Please make your check payable to "Unlimiteds Unanimous" and mail it to:

Unlimiteds Unanimous
1312 164th Place NE
Bellevue, WA 98008



The R.O.T.T. banquet on Saturday night in the Tri-Cities.

Tuesday after the HAPO Columbia Cup, was the annual Seafair press conference in Seattle. The press conference is for all Seafair activities around the time of the Albert Lee Appliance Cup unlimited race, including military ship tours, Blue Angels, plus the unlimiteds, Grand Prix, and F1 tunnel boats, etc.

A new kids' area was added to the race site this year, sponsored by Aetna. Water polo and BMX freestyle events were added during race weekend, likely to expand the age diversity of those attending the hydro races. (Unfortunately, only a portion of spectators on the shore can see those new events, which amplifies the down time for those on the shore and log boom that can't see them.)

Unlimited race sponsor Albert Lee III spoke and he relayed that Seafair is a way for Albert Lee Appliance to give back to the community. Master of ceremonies, Mark Allen, and last year's Albert Lee Cup winner, Andrew Tate, represented the unlimited boats and H1 at the press conference.

While Allen and Tate's presentations were fine, I'd suggest for the future that the MC and the Albert Lee Cup winner get together before the press conference to coordinate a more comprehensive presentation that clearly states all the boats and

drivers participating and reviews the likely competition that will occur at the Albert Lee Cup. More clarity about the radio and TV coverage would be appropriate, too.

This is the first year that I can remember where a full PR kit was not available to the media. And this year, media credentials were not available at the press conference for the media to pick up. (Suggestion: If Seafair wants the best turn out of media for the Seafair press conference, make it clear that the media picks up their Albert Lee Cup credentials at the press conference.)

Thursday night, August 3, was the annual Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum's (HARM) gala and fundraiser. This year, the Oberto hydroplane sponsorship

was honored, which included showing a great video that chronicled the Oberto unlimited hydroplane sponsorship. Many past crew, drivers, and boat owners that raced for Oberto were present. Art Oberto, almost 90, spoke to the crowd, too. The event was well attended and the silent and live auctions provided significant funding for the HARM in Kent, Washington.

At the Albert Lee Cup race site, all was generally better organized this year, although some boats did have problems getting into the pits and parking on Thursday. Preparations for the event were ready for Friday. Public parking was easier and could be reserved, but was expensive. Metro bus transportation was confusing as the Seafair website did not match what the bus system released and reported on local TV news.

The weather was warm, but British Columbia forest fires brought somewhat smokey air for all three days. The F1s, Grand Prix, and H1 Unlimited boats all tested and raced. Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum vintage boats ran, too. The schedule was a little different this year with more unlimited racing on Saturday and less on Sunday. Heats IA and IB, and 2A



From the left, Andrew Tate, the U-9 owner Mike Jones, and Albert Lee III, sponsor of the race, while at Seafair's annual pre-race press conference.



Part of the crowd that attended the Seafair Race in Seattle.

and 2B were on Saturday and Heats 3A and 3B, plus the final, were on Sunday.

There was lots of air show on Sunday, and frankly, a fair amount of down time as some events could not be seen from large parts of the shore. Only the central and northern part of the crowd could see the F1s and only the shore south of the pits could see BMX and water polo. The boats on the long log boom could likely see none of them. The whole schedule needs to be reviewed and tightened up on Sunday, me thinks. The unlimited racing was good. The crowd over the three days was larger than last year.

The big news at Seafair was the reduction in KIRO TV coverage on Sunday. All wanted to see how the changes would work. In the past there was all-day, live KIRO TV coverage on Sunday. This year, the new KIRO TV head honcho—from Oklahoma—decided that the TV demographic did not warrant all-day, live TV. KIRO TV decided to stream the race on Sunday and have a 90-minute Seafair recap show from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Sunday evening.

That might have worked fine, except the streaming was horrible and the Seafair recap show was even worse. The racing streaming was basically from a single camera and sometimes did not have audio

and sometimes the audio did not match what the camera streamed. Another camera was overlooking the pits, but appeared not to be able to cover award presentations. Honestly, a junior high AV/technology club would have done better.

The Seafair recap show was a total disaster. One would have thought that there would have been a recap of the Saturday and Sunday heats, a replay of the exciting final unlimited heat, and interviews with the first- and second-place drivers.

Nope. The total amount of time devoted to the boats was maybe 10 minutes, probably less. But, there was almost endless air show high-lights.

And, it's not like KIRO didn't have a crew in the pits on Sunday; they did. They just weren't paying attention. They spent more time on a feature about what spectators

brought in their coolers than on what was happening on the lake. I understand one of the reporters spent much of her time trying to figure out how to film an overhead water hose that spritzed a mist of water on folks who walked beneath it in the pits. Yep, no apparent clue as to what was happening with the boats that were parked only a hundred feet away from that compelling hose.

It has been reported to the UNJ that while KIRO TV filmed in the pits, some of the camera work was not technically suitable for use in a broadcast. Good grief. Lots of folks complained to KIRO TV and Seafair. Lots! The UNJ has heard that some of the complaints also have come from frequent advertisers, people KIRO TV will likely listen to.

No one really knows exactly what the terms of the relationship are between KIRO TV and Seafair. Needless to say, TV terms need to be reexamined by Seafair and KIRO TV needs to reflect on the quality of its coverage.

There is some better media news. The *Seattle Times* newspaper provided better-than-usual coverage and there was a pretty good Seafair slide show on the online *Seattle P-I*. KIXI AM provided radio coverage on Sunday. ❖

NEXT MEETING OF UNLIMITEDS UNANIMOUS

Sunday, September 10, 2017
Meeting starts at 2 p.m.

Bellevue Public Library, Room 4
1111 - 110th Ave. NE
Bellevue, Washington 98198

YOU ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND!