



Mickey Remund: Letters from Prison.

“Every sport needs its own version of ‘The Mick’ to capture the enthusiasm of the fans. ‘The Mick’ in baseball was Mickey Mantle. ‘The Mick’ in boat racing was Mickey Remund.”

A quote from Fred Farley, the late Unlimited Hydroplane Historian



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

by Bob Senior

Two-time unlimited hydroplane high-point driving champion Mickey Remund, now 83, is currently spending time in a California prison, having been convicted of arson. Jack Schafer, Jr. told me about this at the San Diego race in September 2009. Having known Mickey since his racing days, I asked Jack for an address, and began a “pen pal” (no pun intended) correspondence with Mickey. This article contains quotes from Mickey’s letters to me.

Eugene Maynard “Mickey” Remund began racing small hydroplanes in the late Fifties. His first boat race was at Long Beach, California Stadium on July 4, 1958. Later, he reached 102.8 mph in 55-Y, *Piranha*, a 48 owned by Dr. Henry V. Eastman, and he later drove a Ron Jones, Sr. hull 16-F *The Going Thing*, which was owned by Bud Fox and Wayne Thompson.

His first unlimited ride came in 1970 aboard the *Miss Van’s P-X*, but his big break came three years later when he was chosen to drive the brand-new “Winged Wonder” *Pay ‘n Pak*. He later saw time in the *Lincoln*

Thrift, drove Bernie Little’s *Miss Budweiser* for parts of three seasons, then ended his unlimited career in 1984 behind the wheel of *The Squire Shop*.

Remund’s career box score in unlimited hydroplanes shows a total of 11 race victories in the 53 contests he entered between 1970 and 1984. In the history of the sport, not many drivers have attained double-digit race wins.

Sadder Times.

Mickey Remund’s troubles began early on Sunday morning June 22, 2008, when he went to Lemon Grove, California, located east of San Diego, and appeared at the home of his estranged wife, Gale Remund. The two had been separated for two years at the time and his wife had also received a restraining order against Remund.

According to police reports, the 75-year-old Remund set fire to his wife’s garage then drove to the home of his stepdaughter, “Skeeter” LaGrace, in nearby Spring Valley, crashed his van into

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My \$0.02 Worth

Editorial Comment



Andy
Muntz

I'm sure you've heard it before, the definition of insanity that people like to throw around: That it's doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. While I'm sure a psychiatrist might quibble with it as a true definition, it does make a good point. If you're doing something that doesn't seem to be working, maybe it's time to consider doing it a different way?

Something appears to not be working when it comes to unlimited hydroplane racing. Attendance at races is down, boat and race sponsors are hard to find, and the number of boats and race sites is dwindling. The recent exit of Peters & May from the sport is just the latest indicator of the troubles.

Could part of the problem be in the way that the races themselves are run?

Unlimited hydroplane races have been organized the same way for most of the past 100 years. There is a series of preliminary heats with four or five boats each

and then a final heat with maybe six boats. With down time between heats for air shows and other activities, a race takes most of an entire day. On race day in Seattle last summer, for instance, the fans saw four preliminary races and a final over the span of more than six hours. At a time when Major League Baseball thinks a three-hour game is too long, that may be pushing the patience of all but the most dedicated race fan.

As you'll see on the facing page, the organizers of the Madison Regatta devised a simplified system of holding a race as they considered ways to cut costs. They plan to invite only four boats, have them race in a series of two-boat heats where every boat will compete against every other boat, and then have a four-boat final that will determine the race winner.

The format doesn't make a lot of sense to me, however. If you have four boats in the pits and all four will make it to the final, what's

the incentive of running hard in the preliminary heats? Seems to me that the only thing that can come from the match races is bad, something that would eliminate a boat or driver from the final.

Yet, I'm intrigued with the idea of match races for larger fields of boats. It would bring a different dimension to racing strategy when a driver has only one other competitor to concern him, dicing before the start would be interesting, and a boat sponsor also would get more exposure.

Something similar to what the National Hot Rod Association does for drag car races might be worth considering. With eight boats competing in a double-elimination bracket event, and with a four-boat final at the end, the fans would see a total of 10 match races, plus the final. That would pack a lot more boat racing action into a day of sitting on the beach.

EDITOR: Andy Muntz **EDITOR EMERITUS:** Michael Prophet

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Craig Fjarlie, Chris Tracy, Dick Sanders

HYDROFILE EDITOR/WEBMASTER: Lon Erickson **HISTORIAN:** Bob Greenhow

EDITORIAL BOARD: Clint Newman II, Bob Senior

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EDITOR: Unlimited NewsJournal, 14313 Beverly Edmonds Road, Edmonds, WA 98026.

Email: ajmuntz@icloud.com

Letters may be edited for clarity and space.

Changes in store for the Madison race.

Race organizers in Madison, Indiana, have made a number of significant changes in the way the race will be presented this year. The Madison Regatta committee has received approval from H1 Unlimited for a race that will have only four unlimited boats that will compete in two-boat preliminary races. The committee also decided earlier to reduce the size of the racecourse to two miles.

The new race format is intended to cut costs for the Madison race, says regatta president Dan Cole. With a race canceled two years ago by a flooding Ohio River and other weather challenges in recent years, the Madison Regatta has struggled to pay H1 Unlimited the \$165,000 it asks to bring its boats and officials to a race site.

Using the standard race format for 2017, the committee would pay each boat team \$12,000 in tow money to appear at the race. Bringing in four boats instead of the typical eight will save money, even though the tow money for the four that do appear will be increased.

With only four competitors, the committee devised a race program in which the four will compete against each other in pairs in a round-robin-style format. All four of the boats will then compete in a final heat that will determine the winner. Cole said some details of the race are yet to be worked out, such as whether the boats will earn points that will count toward the season standings.

The decision to change to a two-mile course was made in November to put on a better show for fans and make the racecourse

safer, according to Cole. The new course also will no longer go under the Madison-Milton Bridge.

While the new race format will feature only four unlimiteds, the event also will include at least 10 auto-powered hydroplanes from

the Grand Prix West circuit, a sport that is chaired by Sam Cole, Dan Cole's brother and a former chair of H1 Unlimited. The Grand Prix boats will run between the unlimited heats on a shorter mile and a quarter racecourse.

Peters & May pulls out of the sport.

After eight years of sponsoring an unlimited hydroplane, the Peters & May Group has decided to step away from the sport. Dave Holley, CEO of Peters & May, said the company no longer gets the return on investment from the sport that it is seeking, specifically on the international side. "This and our recent change of marketing direction means that we have to step away," he said.

Peters & May provides complete global transport and freight services for boats and yachts.

The company got involved in hydroplane racing in 2010 when it sponsored the U-37 boat. Peters &

May then followed owners Scott and Shannon Raney when they formed the U-11 team the following year. The high point of that relationship came in 2012 when the team set a new UIM world kilo speed record on Coniston Water in England.

"Peters & May has been a great partner," said Scott Raney, "not only for our team but for the entire powerboat community."

Holley said their decision to move on is not due to the actions of the U-11 team. He said the company will be watching the sport carefully over the next few years and they are confident that change is in the pipeline.

The 2017 H1 Season

Testing in the Tri-Cities, Washington	June 2
Testing in Guntersville, Alabama	June 17
Race in Madison, Indiana	June 30 to July 2
Race in the Tri-Cities, Washington.....	July 28 to 30
Race in Seattle, Washington.....	August 4 to 6
Race in Detroit, Michigan.....	August 25 to 27
Race in San Diego, California	September 15 to 17

Letters from prison.

Continued from page 1

her garage, and set fire to the van. Remund then shot himself in the head with a nail gun in an apparent suicide attempt.

When Gale Remund awoke to find her garage on fire, she immediately called her daughter, who found that her house also was on fire. Both escaped the fires without injuries. Remund was found on the ground outside his stepdaughter's house with the wound to his head.

Remund recovered from his wounds and El Cajon County

prosecutors assessed six charges against him, including premeditated attempted murder, arson, and making criminal threats. His trial in El Cajon Superior Court started on Thursday, May 28, 2009.

According to reports by the Associated Press, Deputy District Attorney Chantal De Maurigne said in her opening statement that Remund's attempt to light his

estranged wife's garage on fire was a murder-suicide attempt.

Remund's attorney, Brad Patton, said his client did not intend to harm anyone. During the course of the trial he said his client was upset that he kept losing property because of family court decisions and that he believed his stepdaughter was egging her mother on.



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

In October 1971, *The Going Thing* set a straightaway record of 152.130 mph at Parker, Arizona. Remund became a member of the Gulf Oil Corporation's 100 MPH Club. In 1972, he won nine straight limited races and the Inboard Nationals aboard *The Going Thing*.



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Remund's unlimited debut came at Seafair in 1970, driving Bob Patterson's *Super Cinders II*. The boat arrived at the pit gate being towed by a vintage fire truck. It was later re-named *Miss Van's P-X*, and finished sixth among 14 entries. He also drove *Miss Van's P-X* at three western races in 1971, but did not drive an unlimited in 1972.

The trial lasted five days, with the verdict announced on June 3. Remund was convicted of arson and of making criminal threats, but acquitted on one count of attempted murder. According to the report published in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* the next day, the El Cajon Superior Court jury was deadlocked on two other counts of premeditated attempted murder. “Prosecutors have until

a hearing Wednesday to decide whether to retry Remund on those counts,” said the newspaper account.

The district attorney’s office eventually chose not to seek a re-trial on the deadlocked counts and Remund was sentenced to 13 years in state prison for the arson and criminal threat convictions. Today, about five years of that sentence has yet to be served.

Letter from Mickey:

January 2, 2010

“Thanks for writing, and thanks for sending a copy of the *Unlimited Newsjournal*. I still know a lot of people in the sport. Steve David sent me a nice note from Florida with a saying that is very similar to my thinking. I say ‘a person should be judged by their life record, not just their mistake.’

“I want the friends in racing to know the truth and what really happened. I feel good and am still a happy person. This mess will never change me.”

Letter from Mickey:

Spring 2010

“In my opinion, my wife and her daughter were planning to force me out of my home for over a year. On December 27, 2006, we had a screaming quarrel over \$3,000 and I left and went to a friend’s house to think it through. Then I went home to get an overnight bag and was met by two sheriff’s deputies who escorted me from my home. I was falsely accused of domestic abuse.

“It took me almost two weeks to find a polygraph studio. I found a private investigator and on his equipment a plus 3 and above was truthful, and I was plus 5 and plus 6. I say, one person takes a polygraph test, it should be mandatory the other person takes one also.

“I felt that my civil and constitutional rights to a fair trial had been taken away. Depression depletes your energy, and a main cause of suicide is the deadly fusion of hopelessness, anxiety and panic. I went over to my garage and I was a walking robot.

“I felt I was a Victim of greed. What lying did to me was the crime,



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Remund took a big step upward in 1973 when he was signed by Dave Heerensperger to drive the “Winged Wonder” *Pay ‘n Pak*. During that season, he won four out of nine races and was National High Point Champion. He was the first driver to do a lap over 126 mph on a three-mile course.

His most remembered victory was the 1973 World’s Championship Seafair Trophy, a race in the mist and the rain. Remund in the *Pak* and Dean Chenoweth in *Miss Budweiser* were side-by-side, lap after lap, and heat after heat. From the shore you could only see one roostertail.

The *Pak* team’s biggest disappointment of 1973 was during the APBA Gold Cup race in the Tri-Cities. With a clear lead in the final heat, the *Pak* lost a propeller blade and *Miss Budweiser* went on to win the cup.



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

The 1974 campaign was an unsatisfying season driving Bob Fendler’s *Lincoln Thrift*. His best finish that year was third in the San Diego Cup.

Letter from Mickey:

Late 2013

Memories of Lou Fageol

Lou Fageol and I met in 1959, when I was working at Ring Machine shop (owned by Roger Ring). Both Roger and I were racing Crosley-powered hydros. Lou had a Crosley-powered sports car and stopped by the shop with his son, Ray, to see if we would help him with his Crosley engine. We were glad to help and a friendship was born. One day, Roger and I were going to test our boats on a flood control canal near Sea World, In San Diego, and asked Lou if he wanted to come along. He did, but not with his son, Ray.

After we did our testing, Roger asked Lou if he wanted to drive his boat. Lou said, "No! I promised my wife I would never drive a race boat again, ever." Lou's racing days ended in 1955 after a near-fatal accident when the Slo-mo-shun V he was driving did a 360-degree backflip at 165 mph. Roger said, "Go ahead, take a ride. Your wife won't know." Lou said, "My wife will kill me." But, after a pause, he said, "You guys promise not to tell?"

We both promised. Lou ran the boat down the long canal and back a time or two, and when he returned to the beach, he had a smile as big as all outdoors, and there was that soft, subtle laugh of his. You can't take the racer out of a man like Lou. Roger and I tingled from seeing the excitement and joy in Lou's eyes.

Roger and I kept our word and I don't think even his son, Ray, ever knew about that boat ride, so many years later.

what I did was a response. The arson was a public statement in hope of getting changes in Family Law so it can't be manipulated to be used to destroy anyone."

Letter from Mickey:

June 28, 2010

"On June 22nd, 2008 a three inch long 1/4-20 Allen bolt went from under my chin, through the roof of my mouth between my nose and my left eye and came half way out my forehead with the big end still in my brain cavity.

Ten Miracles:

1. I'm alive and not dis-figured.
2. I still have my faculties.
3. My left eye has good peripheral vision.
4. My sinuses healed themselves and my sense of smell is better than ever.
5. The impact blew all four molars out the left side of my mouth but did not break my jaw.
6. The bolt went through the roof of my mouth while it healed so fast I never could find the hole.
7. I had no pain and do not take one pain pill.
8. I was conscious all the way to Sharp Hospital.
9. I did not have one headache.
10. I still have my sense of humor.

"God gave us Ten Commandments to live by, and gave me Ten Miracles.

"I was in three different hospitals for two weeks. I asked the two surgeons who put my head back together how I lived through all of this. They both just shook their heads and said 'I have no idea.' The second surgeon was supposed to align my fractured cheekbone but before they could schedule the



Mickey Remund and Dean Chenoweth

surgery they took a second x-ray my bones were in line. My Pal, God!

"I'm a VICTIM, not a CRIMINAL. I'm a victim of attorneys' lust for money, not the truth. I'm a victim of Family Law, and not using any form of lie detector. I'm a victim of the judicial system's desire for Power within their system.

"P.S. Anything I send to you can be made public."

Letter from Mickey:

June 24, 2015

"I met my friend, Larry McAlpine, in 1974 in the BUD camp. He and I plan to set up a web site to get the TRUTH out about my incarceration and my life. We will need some help, as all of my assets stayed in my home when I was forced out at Christmas 2006. I have nothing. I could not even get my Mom's ruby

ring that she wore for 30 years. Our legal system is in disarray."

Letter from Mickey:

February 2016

"I still need a new heart pacemaker, but I'm doing better. My long-time friend, Lawrence McAlpine, is setting up an account for a fund-raiser for new legal support. He and I have been friends for over 40 years. His first race was Detroit in 1973 when I was in the PAK. I trust him 100%."

Letter from Mickey:

September 28, 2016

"Bob, you asked about my schooling and employment. I attended Otay Mesa and Chula Vista, California high schools. My favorite teacher was Mr. Pazonis, who let me bring in the flywheel of my 1932 Ford and make it better. He said yes, and it did. I worked as a machinist most of my life."

Letter from Mickey:

October 2016

"My Heart Situation and Future.

"On 8/1/14 I went to Alvarado Hospital that I call '#1.' They installed a heart pacemaker that is faulty. A pacemaker is a small electrical pulse device to help control abnormal heart rhythms. During an arrhythmia the heart is not able to pump enough blood to the body's vital organs.

"In 2014 I only had two good months, October and November when I felt great. December 4th, 2014 '#1' changed the pacemaker and I felt very bad. After many trips to hospital '#1' they were unable to fix this problem.

"On September 9th, 2016 I went to Tri-City Hospital, '#2.' They saw on their special computer



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Remund signed with Bernie Little and *Miss Budweiser* in 1975. The boat finished fourth in National High Points with wins at Washington, D.C. and Phoenix. He then took a brief retirement from the sport. When *Budweiser* driver Howie Bennis broke a leg in a motorcycle accident in the middle of the 1976 season, Remund rejoined the Bud team and scored a couple of third-place finishes.



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Remund won another National High Point Championship in 1977. Bill Muncey won six races that year, while Remund and *Miss Budweiser* only won three: Madison, Seattle and San Diego. But, by finishing all 28 heats that year, Remund and the *Budweiser* were High-Point champs. Remund retired again after that stellar season.



Rick Sullivan

Remund had been away from the sport for seven years when owner Bob Steil and crew chief Jim Harvey hired him for a swan-song tour aboard *The Squire Shop* in 1984. A win at Syracuse and a second-place finish in National High Points concluded Remund's quarter century of hydroplane racing. An unfulfilled ambition was to capture the Gold Cup. He finished second while driving the *Budweiser* in 1977 and almost pulled off a victory in 1984 with *The Squire Shop*.

that my pacemaker had a bad wire that goes to my heart. This exam took about ten minutes. This will be fixed soon, and I will be up to speed. I have a short three years to go and plan to be very aggressive on early release. The real me will be back soon!"

From Mickey's 2016 Christmas letter:
 "As a young person I was the only one in my family going to church on Sundays. Later I started on the path to look at other religions. The

second half of my life I looked at most religions and I am still looking and loving it.

"My Mom was my special love. She could teach me with loving hugs and examples, not words. My respect for my Mom made my life much easier and kept me on the right track until a year of intentional financial and emotional attacks pushed me over the edge and I reacted completely out of character. I would rather be here with spiritual awareness than be on the outside with spiritual blindness.

"Prison has helped me find a refuge for my soul. On the outside I was always so busy. Jesus was one step behind. My thinking now is, I follow His lead to the best of my ability."

Letter from Mickey:
January 16, 2017

"I'm in the same prison, but they moved me to the 'E-yard'. It's like a hospital. No graffiti and no cockroaches. My health is much better. My cardiologist is very qualified. I have started exercising

for the first time in two years. It's going well. I like this idea from NASCAR: "Those that judge us don't matter. Those that matter don't judge us."

Letter from Mickey's friend, Lawrence McAlpine:

February 7, 2017

"There is evidence that we have that was not allowed in court during Mickey's original trial. This evidence could have changed the entire course of his incarceration. We now want to get that before the court on an appeal.

"As most public defender cases do not get just representation in court, the court is only interested in clearing the docket and looking good in the public's eye. Mickey did not have proper representation in court. An appeal (which will cost money) is our hope that will get Mickey Remund out of prison".

Email from Lawrence McAlpine:
February 9, 2017

"I have created a Go Fund Me account to raise money on behalf of Mickey Remund. The plan is to hire an attorney and appeal the conviction. Access to GoFundMe can be had via Chrome or Firefox at GoFundMe.com/p/w6qyg.

"We are also looking for a pro bono attorney to support our friend's appeal. I can be reached at 213-260-5186 or email at larrymc57@yahoo.com.

"I'm sure that Mickey would enjoy hearing from some of you and will deeply appreciate your financial contributions."

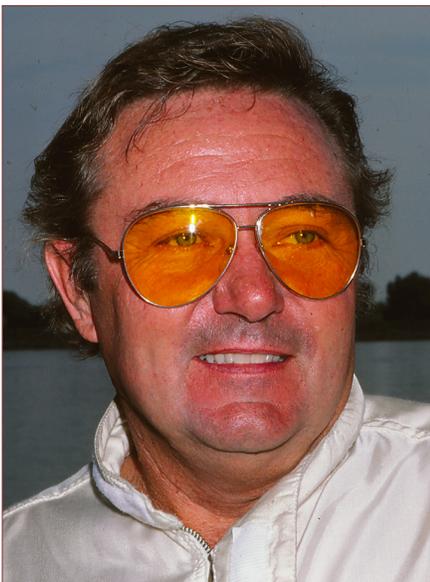
His address is:

E. M. Remund AA 2822

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480 Alta Road

San Diego, CA 92179



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

An interview with Jerry Hale.

Jerry Hale is a fixture in the pit area at West Coast races. He routinely pitches in on boat crews that need an extra hand, usually assisting those with a limited budget. He drove between 1997 and 2005, when a flip at Tri-Cities ended his racing days. Hale was born in 1943 in San Diego, California. "I was a war baby," he notes. His father drove race boats, but they were far from his first love when he was growing up. "For the most part, I just wanted to be one of the boys of summer," he recalls. "Cars were always an interest." Hale received his college degree from Fresno State. He worked as a school teacher in the San Lorenzo School District, in a

continuation high school, and still resides in nearby Hayward. The following interview was conducted by Craig Fjarlie on September 14, 2013, during a break in the action at the San Diego race.

Was your dad [Morey Hale – Ed.] racing when you were born, or did he start later?

No, he came home from the war, World War II, and in the early '50s, he had a friend that was racing outboards. I remember him. He was a big guy. It had to have been a stock runabout class because he could pick the boat up, put it on his hip, and carry it around.

This was your dad's friend?

Friend, yeah. So from there, dad got involved and he built a POD [Pacific One Design – Ed.] in the garage. So that was my introduction to boats. He ran the POD and then he moved into the hydro class, stock.

This is outboards?

No, this is inboards. He and his brother raced. My uncle built a couple hydros. The 48s they were running back then, with the



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Crosley engine. Set a record briefly in that class.

Did they do their own mechanical work with the Crosley?

Yeah, yeah. I remember my uncle laying out the keel, if you want to call it that, with a grip gun in the front, out in the driveway, and then building around it. I thought, wow. But it worked well.

Did they get plans from somebody?

No, they copied whatever was successful. No plans, per se.

Did you learn, work around the boat, go to the races?

I did go to the races, but I wasn't terribly involved. My brother [Ron Hale – Ed]) was, more than I was. He crewed for dad a lot longer than I ever did.

Did your mother ever race boats?

They used to have a powder-puff race on the Oakland Estuary and I think she participated in that. If not, I know she took the boat out.

So at some point you got started. How did that come about?

Well, it was the late '60s before I got involved. I didn't really have that much interest, I mean, I enjoyed going to the races occasionally, but I didn't have that much interest in driving. Circumstances kind of directed it that way, anyway. Dad still had the boat and offered to split use, that kind of thing.

This is still the 48 class?

No, this is the 145.

He moved up to that?

Yeah. They were running a six-cylinder Falcon at the time, 144 inch. So, we would swap heats.

Do you remember where you first drove in competition?

Well, I got qualified in Calero Dam in San Jose, California. We used to have to make a clock start and I can't remember how many laps, had to run a few laps. But it was a little different than what I anticipated, I'll tell you.

Did your dad give you some help?

Well, you know, you watch 'em all the time, that kind of thing, but there wasn't anything, you know, planned and what not.

So you drove the 145 for a while, and then went on to other classes?

Well, I picked up a 145.

So you had a boat of your own.

Oh, yeah. San Francisco Bay to L.A. and picked up a Hallett hull that had a sponson missing, fell off it. So that was my first boat. I think it

was \$75. (Laughter.) He was gonna give it to me, but I felt like I had to give something for it, anyway. It was kind of a tragic thing, because the family had gotten their young man involved in boat racing, trying to keep him on the straight and narrow, that kind of thing. This was his hull. And he had flopped a bike on the way home from the store, cracked his head and killed himself.

Oh, no.

So that's how . . .

Then they sold the boat to you.

I mean, the sponson was off so they didn't want anything to do with it.

So you fixed the boat?

Yeah, we fixed the sponson, went racing, pretty much a low-budget deal.

Yeah.

And then I picked up a ride here and there, 280 . . .

Mostly driving for other people?

Yeah. I figured out pretty fast that it's a heck of a lot cheaper to drive for other people than it is to run your own boat. So, then you get a ride in a decent boat and you can do pretty well. I was pretty successful in other boats.

Now, you moved up, you ran several different classes. The old numbers, 280, 266.

Yeah, in fact I did have another boat. I got a 2.5 Mod, it was a Lauterbach. In fact, I had a friend,

we were out at the Palomino Marine looking at cement sailboats, of all things, and off in the corner with a cover on it, hey, that's got to be a hydro, you know? Took a look at it and it had the dovetail sponsons that Lauterbach built. So we inquired about it, found out it was built by a fellow that worked for Henry.

OK.

His name was (Bill) Bonenburger, if I remember right. Anyway, I made the deal with him and so I ran that class for a little while.

Were you finding there were some classes that you liked better than others?

Well, I liked the more horsepower, you know. The stock classes are fun and the speed is all relative. Of course the stockers you're just wringing it out for all it's worth, all the time. And, you know, it just seems like you want to go faster and faster and faster, that kind of thing. So, when you've got the horsepower it's a little more gratifying when you stomp the throttle.

Were you doing your own mechanical work, then?

My hulls, yeah. Then I got rid of that. I was riding in a couple 280s and a 6-litre.

OK. Did you ever try a flatbottom or a Crackerbox?

Well, I did, since you asked. I don't know if you're familiar with P-88, belonged to Joe d'Angelo out of San Jose. No sense. This goes way back. Super boat, nice boat. I drove his



Randy Hall

In 1981, Jerry Hale set a U.S. closed-course competition speed record of 83.18 mph aboard his 145-class boat *Pisces*.



Hale got his first unlimited ride in 1997 while in the cockpit of the U-9 *Miss Exide* (Hull #8401), which was owned by Mike Jones.

boat at Oakdale, California. I went down into that first turn with everybody else and I ended up going the wrong way. So, that was about it for the Crackerbox. I did ride with Clyde Marney at Sacramento in that boat.

Folsom?

Yeah. They had flipped the first heat. A friend of mine was riding shotgun, Al Dring, and they just did an endo. The patrol boat had gotten underway and set up a roller, right down the chute. Boy, I can still see the arms and legs coming out of that thing, spread eagle. Al hit so hard it pushed water behind his eye. I mean, he was eventually OK. They said he had to go to the hospital.

Sure.

We pulled the mag out of that thing and threw it in an oven in Jerry Croff's camper. Take that out, got it going again. The driver, he was beginning to tighten up, his chest. He says, "I hope you don't want to win." So I rode shotgun with him there and I thought he did a

heckuva job after going on his head. So that's been about my extent with the flatbottoms, was the Crackerbox.

You ran a 6-litre for a while.

Yeah, boat out of San Diego.

Was this somebody else's boat that you drove?

Yeah, Dick Sanders.

So you drove that.

Yeah, California racing for the most part. We did go to Valleyfield and we won what's called the Triple Crown at that.

You won the Nationals there.

Won the Nationals there with that boat, yeah.

Was that your only Nationals win?

Yeah, yeah. But I did run a 2.5 Mod for another guy, Red Reeder. Was a Belleville hull, it was about 19 feet long, like a big shingle. He was

runnin' a Nissan six cylinder. That boat would haul the mail. We ran all over the country with that thing. National title with that.

Those Belleville hulls are pretty fast.

Well, a couple of 'em that I drove for another guy, I went on my head one time. It's interesting, Bob Sholes was the owner of it and he was a former racer, he was good friends with Marcel (Belleville). We all were, but anyway, Marcel had this idea of extending the non-trip from behind the sponson to the transom, to carry it through the turns. Well, I was at Oakland, California, downtown, Lake Merritt, record mile, kinda briny water. But anyway, I was out front, he was talking record. I got a real good exit off the next-to-last turn. I was really carrying the speed down there and the thing just became an airplane because of that side on it. Ooooh (gestures). Away it went. It wasn't there that I tore it up. The other time was at Castaic, Southern California.

You went over there, too?

Yeah. We were going down into the second turn, I was on the inside. And, uh, guy came across and I got into his wake and it did an inside roll so it didn't get too high. When it hit it just tore the dickens out of it. I have a piece of it.

Were you hurt in either of those accidents?

Well, at the time I didn't think so. But on the way home, 'cause I hit upside down, and when I hit it just went bing! I thought, holy moley,

about put my lights out, you know. My neck tightened up. Eventually I got in and got x-rays and what not. Nothing was broken or anything, but man, I had muscle spasms for a long time. Long time. That was the result of it, anyway.

When you were running inboards you must've met Mike Jones, Fred Leland, some of the others. Were they coming to the races so you got to know them?

Mike Jones goes way back. He'd come down and run championship races, you know, Divisionals, Nationals, and what not, 280. So that was kind of my introduction to the unlimiteds, through Mike.

You really knew him from inboards, before that.

Yeah.

Did you know Fred Leland?

I met Fred through a mutual friend. Had the two-engine, single over-head cam Fords in that . . .

Oh, Walt Knudsen?

Walt Knudsen, oh yeah. I used to haul almost every weekend from the San Francisco East Bay down to South El Monte, to Walt's place. He'd gotten plans from Ron Jones for new sponsons for that Eastman plan boat. They [original sponsons – Ed.] were too shallow. Ron Armstrong had driven it here. I don't know for sure if he qualified it.

No, he didn't. He got the closest of anybody, but it never did qualify.



Later in the 1997 season, Hale was handed the controls of Fred Leland's U-99 *Stihl* (Hull #9399), shown here in Seattle. The boat also carried the name *Miss Von's* later that year.

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Yeah. So we were in the process of rebuilding the sponsons and what not. But, you know, it wasn't gonna happen. It was, just, there was too much to do and the transom had to be rebuilt and on and on and on. But we would go up to Fred's a couple times because Walt was getting canopies for him at that time, and other material. He had a friend in South El Monte that was supplying material, skid fins, rudders, that stuff. We went up a couple, three times. Fred was building his apartment over the shop there, so we helped him on that a little bit. Anyway, got to know Fred. So, after I qualified with Jones' boat then, you know, I put in a pitch for his boat and he was generous enough to give me a try. You know, I was an old man at that time, I think.

Were you still running inboards then, or had you pretty well stopped?

No, I wasn't. I hadn't run in a while. They used to have a requirement that you had to have . . .

A certain number of inboard heats.

Twenty heats or something like that. You know, it was always a madhouse to get those in without your own boat, you know. Anyway, they had the requirements. Now anybody can step in. As long as you qualify then you can run. So, that was a lot of fun.

Before you got the offer to drive the unlimited, did you come to the races here?

Yeah.

So you were familiar with them and what they did?

Yeah, well, dad was an official. He was a flag man for a long time. I would actually go out on the judge's stand and help him out. I can remember when, Snyder was it? Double flip.

Oh, the two boats, that was *Madison* and *Circus Circus*.

I was on the judge's stand and threw the red flag. So, I was that involved, anyway. Jim Codling was

out there. Codling was the chief referee.

Of course you must've known him.

Yeah. He was the chief referee at a lot of the limited inboard Nationals, Western Divisionals.

Did you ever come up to Seattle and race at Green Lake?

Yeah, I did. I took my boat up there. It was a nice place.

Yeah.

I can remember (Steve) Reynolds and (Jim) Kropfeld. *White Lightning* and, uh...

Country Boy?

Country Boy, yeah. Deck-to-deck for the five miles there on Green Lake.

Well, when Mike Jones asked you to drive, gave you a shot at the unlimited, how did that happen? Did he call you and say do you want to drive?

No, I called him and we made a deal. So, I jumped in.

You went back east to a couple races, Evansville and Madison, and got your laps in. You didn't actually race until they came out west to Tri-Cities.

Yeah, I went back east. We went to Norfolk, too, but that was with Fred.

What were your thoughts the first time you were in an unlimited? Turbine engine and everything?

They were a bit of a handful. You know, it's a big boat and they just don't handle like a limited inboard.

Yeah.

I couldn't horse 'em around, that was for sure. You know, you gotta kinda plan ahead a little bit further because things happen pretty fast. You're going like crazy.

The turns come up fast.

The turns come up, yeah. The other thing is, watch these guys go through the turns flat out and you know, hook up the fin, and that's what I had to find out if I could do.

Yeah.

I was comfortable with that in Mike's (boat). In fact, he had basic chute speed in that boat, but it laid down terribly in the turns. I think Mike Hanson pretty well ironed that boat out.

He fixed a lot of stuff for Jones.

Yeah, Mike (Hanson) and I used to race against each other in 2.5 Mod.

Yeah, yeah.

He drove *Madam Blue*.

Well, you drove for Jones at a couple of races and then you moved over and started driving for Fred Leland.

Yeah.

You drove for Leland at Seattle. You got wrenched in the cockpit or something happened and you weren't feeling too well.

Oh, that happened at Madison, in the turn down there. It was in Mike's boat. Shoulder strap, the seat belt, slipped off and when I hit a hole I came up out of the seat. When I came down, I came down on my ribs on the seat.

OK.

I initially had that checked, nothing was broken and what not, but it hurt. So, I was kind of fighting that when I moved into Fred's boat. You know, I couldn't do a decent job, I didn't think, and so at Seafair I had to step out of it. Mark (Evans) stepped in there. That's when Fred



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

In 1998 and 1999 Jerry Hale drove Bob Fendler's U-19 (Hull #9299), shown here as *Easter Seals*. Hale also saw action with the boat named *The Waikiki Trolley* and *Tveten's R.V. Mart*.

was running, what, three or four boats?

Now, at this point you were no longer driving any inboards?

No.

You were just focusing on the unlimited?

Yeah.

The next season you drove for Bob Fendler. Different boat but it was a former Leland hull that Nate Brown built for Fred.

Yeah, well, actually Mitch Evans moved over to the *Appian*, and that opened up an opportunity there with Fendler.

So, how did that arrangement come about? You must've gotten to know Fendler.

I think Fred put in a good word for it.

And Fendler needed a driver.

Right.

Did he call you and say, would you like to do this?

Yeah.

And you drove . . .

We went to Hawaii a couple of times.

You drove a couple of years for him.

Yeah. It was a fairly decent boat.

Sure.

Just like you see fairly decent boats today. But the budget . . .

That was one thing. He didn't have a lot of money to work with.

The other thing, too, is that Bob got sick. That put us on the beach for a couple of years. So, there's this gap, and then another gap, that kind of thing, when I was driving for him. It was anything but consistent, you know. And it was too bad . . . Bob, I enjoyed him.

He had good stories to tell, was always very personable.

Yeah, absolutely.

Then at Havasu, 2000, you drove *New Kid in Town*.

Oh, yeah.

You were going to make the final heat and then Leland repossessed the boat.

Yeah.

How did that boat compare? Driving that was kind of a lark,

because you happened to be there as a spectator. They needed a driver and they asked you?

That's exactly right. I was going to all the races.

That was kind of a newer boat, didn't have a lot of heats on it.

Aw, I think it did all right, but, you know, I can't remember if it was much different than anything else. I kept asking these guys that had driven Fred's boats. It was hard to get out of the turns. It wasn't hard to get into the turns. You go into the turns as fast as you want to go and you have to use your knees and everything else to get the boat squared away coming out of the turns, you know.

Yeah.

It seemed to be typical in the case of Fred's boats. I don't know, maybe it was just me.

It wasn't that way with Mike Jones' boat?

Not necessarily, but it is an effort, you know. The thing wants to keep comin' on around.



Jerry Hale attended the Mohave Hydrofest in Lake Havasu, Arizona, as a spectator, but when Jack Barrie couldn't qualify as a driver, Hale took the steering wheel of the U-28 *New Kid in Town* (Hull #9701).

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



Steve Conner

Hale's last unlimited ride was at the Tri-Cities in 2005 when he flipped the U-99 Miss Lakeridge Paving.

To get it straightened out.

Yeah.

You were out for a couple years, and then Fendler's crew chief tried to bring his boat back and run it. It wasn't really ready and they didn't have a lot of money to work with. You ran one heat or something at Seattle.

Well, Ron Moen bought the boat. He had it for Tri-Cities and Seattle. That was it for him.

Yeah.

And then the team went away.

Then you came back for the last time with Leland in 2005.

Um hmm.

It didn't end so well at Tri-Cities. That was a different hull than you had driven for him earlier.

Yeah.

You ran about two laps in your first heat and the boat went over backwards.

That was a river flyer.

What happened with that?

Well, I hit a little bit of a wake and you know, just about as fast as you could go starting into the turn it got up and . . . this is gonna hurt. But I was lucky.

You were pretty shook up after the flip?

Yeah, oh, absolutely.

But you were walking around.

Yeah. I was in the race when Dave Villwock got hurt, so I was really fortunate.

Had you had enough, to say no more?

Uhhh, no exactly.

If somebody had offered you a ride would you have taken it, do you think?

I think so, yeah. Still would've. Time has passed now, though.

You're still around helping on crews and things?

I crewed for Fred.

You worked with him out west every year after that?

Yeah. Good friends, lots of good times. You know, even went to Doha a couple of times.

Kind of whenever somebody needs an extra hand, you're there.

Yeah. If they've got a broom handy, I can handle that. (Laughter.)

Working on a turbine compared with working on a piston engine, did you find a lot of changes and things you had to do to learn how they operate?

Never could find the spark plugs on the turbine engine! No, mechanics are mechanics and it's just a matter of learning the systems. Of course, been working on automotive engines half your life. A lot of guys made the transition. I remember Bud Gilbert that crewed for . . . who was it? He was on George Stratton's team.

Oh, Kim Gregory.

Gregory, yes. I mean, this guy was an engine builder from the get-go. He'd been building automotive engines forever. He moved into that turbine, he could handle that, you know, made the transition and what not. So I was impressed. I know others have, too . . .

Yeah.

. . . up and down the line.

Well, we've covered quite a bit.

OK.

We have your story preserved now.

Oh, my God!

Thanks for your time.

OK.

LIVING YOUR COLLECTION:

A visit to the Gold Cup Lounge.

In last month's NewsJournal, we visited the collections of several hydroplane fans. Our readers faithfully collect a wide range of hydroplane things, from pins to glasses, driver uniforms to art, pieces of boats, and a wide assortment of models, all displayed in all sorts of ways. One of the most extensive displays has been assembled by Brad and Debbie Luce, which they lovingly call the Gold Cup Lounge. Viewing it is usually by invitation only, but we have arranged for a special visit for our readers this month.

by Craig Fjarlie and Lon Erickson

Brad Luce is known for his announcing work at Tri-Cities and other race sites. He and his wife, Debbie, have a home in Auburn, Washington. The lower level is decorated with all sorts of hydroplane memorabilia. The room includes a bar, big screen TV, and ample seating. They have named the space the Gold Cup Lounge and Gold Cup winners have been guests in their unique home.

Luce attended his first unlimited hydroplane race in 1954, when he was two years old. Over the years, he has amassed a large collection of hydroplane artifacts. "You collect all this stuff and you can't throw it away when you get



Lon Erickson



Chris Denslow

Brad Luce in his role as the announcer for the Gold Cup, here in Detroit last summer.

it," Luce explains. "I always had it in the back of my head that some day, somewhere, somehow, I was going to have a place where I could display it all."

Shortly after Brad and Debbie (known as Angel to her hydroplane friends) were married, they purchased the house. "I remember walking downstairs going, 'Punch out this wall, this could work,'" Luce remembers. They obtained help from an acquaintance who builds commercial bars. "He told us the measurements. We had some help with it, but it was our idea, how to lay it out," Luce says. "This used to be a bedroom, where we are with the bar."

The walls are covered with

color and black & white photographs and posters. The bar has glasses from various race sites. Other items, including a table cloth from the Broadway Hotel in 1971, the year *Miss Madison* won the Gold Cup, a steering wheel, and a U-3 valve cover, are displayed throughout the Gold Cup Lounge. "I freshen it up every once in a while, change some of the pictures. I'm a couple of years behind," Luce admits. "HomeStreet blue's not in here. Sorry, Jimmy."

The Luce collection is huge. "My grandkids were here one time and we had a game with the little kids," Debbie Luce recalls. "We said, 'How many pictures are on display?' We got six or eight different



numbers. It was, like, 180 at that point. There have to be 300 pictures in here by now.”

“Almost everything in here has a special meaning,” Luce adds. “There’s a story behind almost everything.” There’s a model of *Hawaii Ka’i III*. “Roger (Newton)

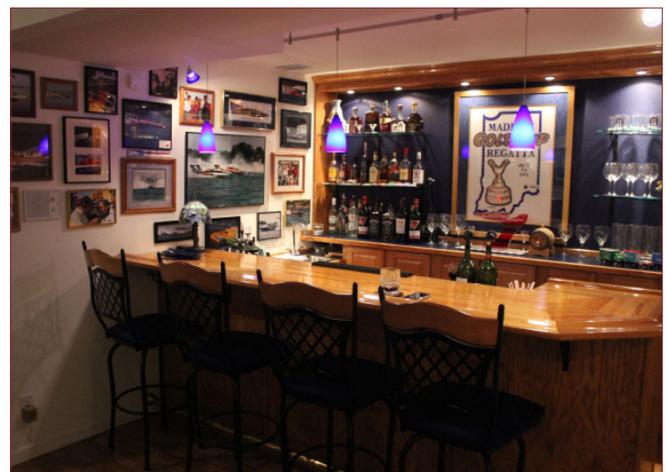
made that. It sat on top of our wedding cake.” The model of the boat came in a little box. “That’s what I carry my Bluetooth in when I travel.”

Asked if he has a favorite item in the collection, Luce pauses. “Probably the most prized possession is one of the owner’s trophies. Tom Bertolini made this for me; gave it to me for Christmas. It says Gold Cup Announcer and it has a medallion for each year. When I opened it I started to have a hunch what it was. I really welled up. That was pretty cool. That’s probably my prized possession.”

Luce admits he’s living a dream. “We were kids growing up with the Gold Cup in Seattle. To think, I grew up and grabbed a mic and I get to call ‘em. Ron Musson and

Rex Manchester and those guys that were all gods that we were talking about. Now the Jimmy Shanes and J. Michael Kellys, they’re all my friends. Their wives and everything have all been down here and sat at the bar. We’ve had parties down here. I tell my son I’m really living a dream, I really am.”

Brad and Debbie Luce are justifiably proud of the Gold Cup Lounge and the memories it evokes. “The tag line is “The Unlimited Experience,”” Luce notes. “Obviously, that has meaning to anybody who enters on the unlimited side.” The lounge is a testament to the hold that hydroplane racing has on its most ardent fans. The Luces have put that testament on display for their friends and family to witness.



Photos by Lon Erickson

HydroFile

Race Team News



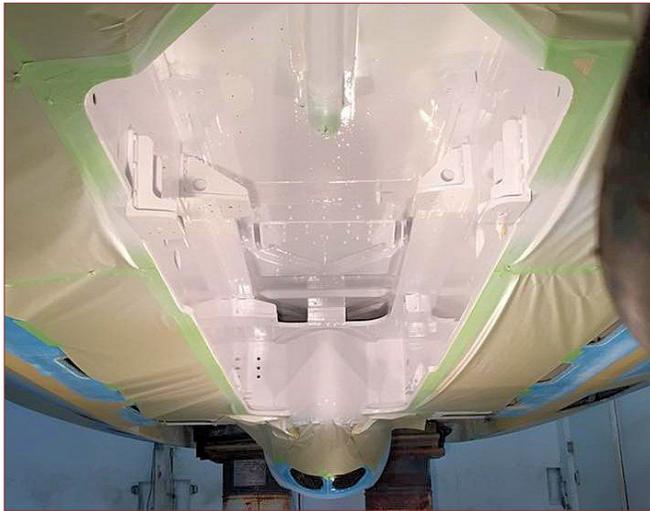
Lon Erickson

U-1 Miss HomeStreet Bank

Mid-February the hull had the decks back on and body work continued. Now the boat is upside down and engine bay painted. The bottom of the hull is next.



Miss Madison Racing



Tyler Hanson

U-5/U-7 Porter Racing

While the U-5 raceboat remains at the Rob Graham shop in Milton, WA, there has been no information coming out of the Porter Racing team with regards to the 2017 season.



Graham Trucking Racing

U-11 Unlimited Racing Group

Peters & May announced they are stepping away from sponsorship of the U-11 and H1 racing. After six years supporting Scott and Shannon Raney's involvement in unlimited racing, Dave Holley, Peters & May CEO, remarked, "Unfortunately the sport no longer allows the U11 to present us with the return on investment we are seeking, specifically on the international side. This combined with our recent change of marketing direction means that we have to step away." The Raney's Unlimited Racing Group is already hard at work cultivating a number of sponsorship opportunities along with upgrades to their racing equipment and will be competing in the H1 Unlimited 2017 series. If you are interested in finding out more about the opportunity to join them, please contact Shannon Raney at shannon@u11racing.com



Peters & May Racing

NEXT MEETING OF UNLIMITEDS UNANIMOUS

Sunday, March 12, 2017
Meeting starts at 2 p.m.

Bellevue Public Library, Room 6
1111 - 110th Ave. NE
Bellevue, Washington 98004

YOU ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND!