



Mira Slovak; Part Two

by Craig Fjarlie

Last month, in part one of the interview, Mira Slovak talked about escaping from Czechoslovakia, coming to the United States, working first as a crop duster, then as a private pilot for Bill Boeing, Jr. Through Boeing, he was introduced to unlimited hydroplane racing. He drove Boeing's *Miss Wahoo* in 1956 and '57. When Boeing took the 1958 season off, Slovak drove *Miss Burien* in the Apple Cup and *Miss Bardahl* for the rest of the season, winning two races and securing the National Championship for Bardahl. This month, Slovak talks about driving *Wahoo* in 1959 and '60, *Tahoe Miss* in 1966, and compares unlimited racing today with his era. The interview was conducted by Craig Fjarlie on August 5, 2011, in the Seafair press room, when Slovak was in town to drive the replica *Miss Wahoo*. Readers should keep in mind that English was a second language for Slovak.



Mira Slovak in 2009 at Seattle. ~ HARM Collection photo

When *Wahoo* came back in '59 with the Rolls, how did that feel, the performance?

Much better than I remember it, because then it was like getting a really . . . because they balanced it so perfectly.

The balance was . . .

Terrific. I mean, the reason I got slow rolled here (1960 – Ed.) of course is because I had too much confidence in the boat. The boat is untouchable. Speed-wise, uh, I just couldn't believe how well it was running. Too much confidence and I went too fast and oop! That, it was my fault.

You drove *Miss Pay 'n Save* at the Diamond Cup. *Wahoo* didn't go.

Uh, *Pay 'n Save*?

Yeah. *Wahoo* didn't go to the Diamond Cup. *Wahoo* never went to the Diamond Cup.

I don't recall I drove it.



Above the U-101 *Miss Wahoo* being launched at Lake Chelan for the 1959 Apple Cup. The number changed to 101.5 and the name to *Wahoo* for the next race; Seattle. ~ H&RM Collection photo

It was just that one time. It became *Miss Seattle Too* but it was *Miss Pay 'n Save*.

(Slovak drove *Miss Pay 'n Save* in the second heat of the 1959 Diamond Cup. He made less than a lap when the boat hooked, the engine stalled, and he was unable to re-start. The incident is covered in detail in the book *Hydromania, A History of the Diamond Cup*, by Stephen Shepperd – Ed.)

Well, later that year you won the President's Cup.

Yeah.

You got to meet President Eisenhower as well.

Yeah, Mr. Boeing, myself, met Eisenhower at the White House. We went there for 10 minutes, we spent 40 minutes. President Eisenhower was very much interested in everything.

Yeah, and he knew about you.

Well, I knew about him. No, but he said, "Well, I drove by. I was in Prague." I said, "I remember, Mr. President, I was a kid, I was waving at you." He kind of remarked, "Well, you should come and say hello to me." (Laughter.) I remember he was going to the main square in Prague. I think it was '45 or '46, and I was there and waved. Never dreamed that I was going to . . .

Yeah.

So then we started talking with Mr. Boeing about the airliners and so forth. He was briefed about the boats and he was very much interested. Had lots of questions. I think it was that time, probably never again ever happen. Mr. Boeing, I flew for him, I had the license and everything. I was qualified, but because of the law a non-citizen can't have an FCC license. So Mr. Boeing got Senator Jackson at the time, and Senator Magnuson, and they introduced a bill to get non-citizen FCC. Today, when an outsider comes in he can automatically get FCC, get on the radio. But when I came in I couldn't do it. So Mr. President Eisenhower signed the waiver that the non-citizen can have FCC license.

That was talked about when you met him?

Yes, we talked about it, and I thanked him for it, because then I could use the radios legally.

In '59 you also won a race at Lake Mead.

Yes. I don't know if it was 11 cylinders was Lake Mead? Bill Stead had some problem, he jumped the gun or something. Yeah, that was Lake Mead in Las Vegas.

Well, in 1960 you went to Chelan with *Wahoo*, and at Seafair you had the flip.

I think 1960 was the problem with Bill Muncey. I think so.

Yeah, that's the year he won.

Yeah, OK, that's the...

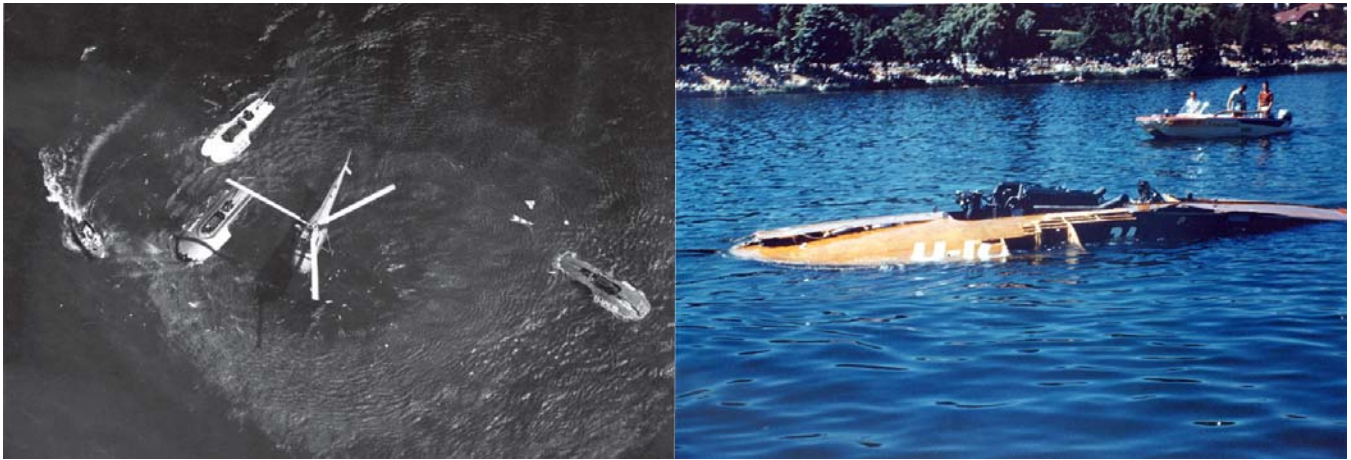
'59 was real rough and *Pay 'n Save* won.

OK. And '60 was the time Bill won.

Yeah.



Above Mira waves as U-101.5 *Wahoo* returns to the pits after winning at Vegas. ~ Bob Greenhow Collection photo



Above left a shot from a helicopter after the accident. ~ John Vallentyne photo - At right the wrecked *Wahoo* is towed into the lagoon. ~ Rich Ormbrek photo

And then '60 I flipped the boat.

Yeah, and that happened here in the north turn.

Was it Dallas Sartz, or Rex? One of those.

It was Dallas Sartz.

I made a good start, I was on the floor and comfortable and he started pushing me, I remember. I was on the buoys, on the inside, I had a good position, comfortable, I was already racing the Gold Cup. I got the equipment. Excitement, I guess, too much confidence and I just went too fast and she hook on me.

Rolled.

Back in the hospital (laughs). And lots of nurses.

Were you badly hurt?

It wasn't too bad. Back, and some bones. It was just kind of the impact I think I was a couple, three weeks in. I remember because '60, when I was taking my citizenship papers, my back was just . . . '60 after the race, there was, I had to go to the judge for the exams and my back was just killing me. It was hurting so. I hit it, probably, but I don't remember that I broke anything. It just kind of hit hard. And under pain I was making the citizenship I got.

So it all worked out. Now, they fixed the boat and you went down to Lake Mead for the Gold Cup. That was the year it was blown out, but you did qualify. Did the boat feel any different after it was repaired?

I don't remember, really. We didn't race, did we?

No, that was the year it was cancelled. The wind . . .

It was the wind this time.

But you did run the boat in qualifying.

Yeah, yeah.

Do you remember, did it feel any different?

I don't think so, you know, it's a couple days ago!

Yeah.

Mostly, unfortunately, guess at what is happening. No, I, uh, the *Wahoo* was, uh, it had to be good because Mr. Boeing kind of gave up and (it) went to *Miss Exide* and Bill Brow won lots of races with it.

Yeah. Now, you didn't race in '61 or '62.

I didn't, no.

Did you feel you were retired, or . . .

When I went in the hospital I always retired.

Yeah.

When I get out of the hospital, it's a different story. Wounds heal, you forget, and you're back again in the boat.

Yeah.

So anybody said when Slovak gonna say that he is, uh, gonna quit, he's lying! (Laughter.)

How did the arrangement

with Miss Exide come about?

'63, you know, Milo Stoen and his brother, Glen, they approached me and said, "Would you like to drive?" I said, "Well, yes, I will." So I gave it a try. Of course in '63 we went to the Gold Cup in Detroit. Very bad, and went to Coeur d'Alene and exploded. I'm back in hospital. I still had bandages on my chin at Seafair. Dallas also had the accident (the year) before. So we were in the cart driving with first aid people. And Bill Stead said, "Mira, I'm starting the Reno Air Races. Would you like to fly my airplane?" I said, "I don't think I should fly your airplane I was going to be flying airliners pretty soon." He said, "Come to Reno, you're going to fly the F8F, the Bearcat" So I drove, flew the Bearcat.

And the next year at the Reno Air Races, first time, in the open, we won the Reno Air Races.

OK.

But I still had patches on my chin, was all banged up. '65 I also flew there, at Reno again. (Slovak finished fourth in '65 – Ed.)

Well, in '66 you got the ride in Tahoe Miss.

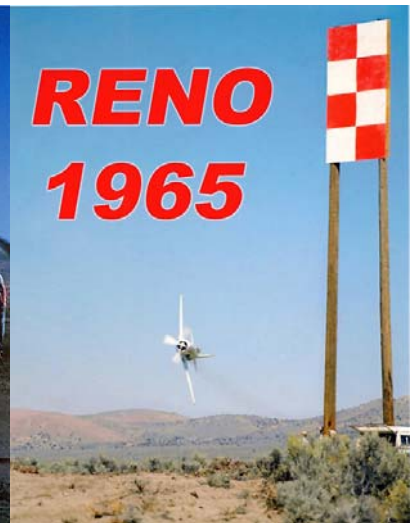
Yeah.

If we can talk about Tahoe for a little while . . .

Tahoe was a very heavy boat and very comfortable in the rough water.

Yeah.

Kept the momentum. It was, uh, real, uh, it was a nice boat. Everybody was complaining particularly in, uh, in Detroit River. Most of the guys, with that accident in Washington, D.C., Manchester, and Don Wilson, and Ron Musson got killed there, so, but it was a good driving boat in rough water. That accident kind of cooled everyone down and we went to the Gold Cup in, uh, in Detroit. That's the time he was trying the lower straightaway, it was Chuck Thompson. An acquaintance of mine. He got



Above left Mira in the Smirnoff Vodka F8F Bearcat in 1964. At right the 1965 Reno program with Mira flying the Smirnoff Vodka. ~ File 10 photos



Above the wrecked U-75 Miss Exide on display at Seattle. ~ Bob Greenhow Collection photo

released driving from *Tahoe Miss*, whatever reason I have no idea what it was. I remember he said, "Mira, I love you but it's going to be a tough race." I said, "Chuck, we have mutual respect for each other, but I hope you have some reason, you know that" He said, "I know that but if we hit the wall, it's gonna be a fight" He started, he was inside the course. I looked to the left, he was coming, like a terrible swell, sitting on the side. Terrible swell, I saw it. Right in front of me. Actually, there's a picture, there's a piece of wood, I saw the wood coming, coming flying over my head. I turned. I know there as just pieces. The helicopter was right there. So I just kept going. And bad, very bad.

What do you remember about the '66 President's Cup? You were there.

'66 President's Cup? Uh, the statement, unfortunate, the statement of one owner was "Sit up there." And, uh, I had to do in Tampa, there was a hurricane going through there. I just had to get points to go to the Gold Cup. We wanted to shoot for a Gold Cup, and get points, because I wasn't a guy who was qualified for the Gold Cup. I had to have so many races under my belt. So a meeting, they told me, Harry Volpi, "Mira, you need points," and he told me what to do. So I said, "I'm going

to stay back, let these guys fight it out" It was Rex Manchester and Donnie Wilson. To my best knowledge he was outside, getting ahead of me. And Rex Manchester in *Notre Dame* start flying. And I didn't know if he was going to go even to the right, I would have hit him there. But he went to the left and came down where Wilson was. So I carried on, came back. I couldn't see anybody on the outlet, where Wilson was.

What was the feeling in the pit area afterwards?

Well, it was very, you know, Musson got killed . . .

It's hard to imagine what it was like.

Awful. I don't know why we were racing.

Yeah.

It was like a mortuary, really. Top guys, the top competition guys. I think Musson got a little bit too much, the boat was unknown to him. It was the first cabover after *Thriftway Too*. Should have thrown it away then, I guess. It's kind of hard. It exploded.

He had a broken blade on the propeller and the shaft twisted.

Yeah, I know he hit, yeah.

Well, to move on to Detroit, you won the Gold Cup.

It was kind of a real hollow victory, you know.



Above the 1966 U-3 *Tahoe Miss* (3) on the crane at D.C. ~ Karl Pearson Collection photo



Above the wrecked U-40 *Miss Bardahl* (4) on display. ~ Bob Greenhow Collection photo

You were able to finish back in the final heat and still win (on total points).

I had the points, yeah. It wasn't too much of a race, really, because my competition was gone. I just, "You guys go ahead." But it was kind of a, pretty eerie feeling.

Well, you won the Diamond Cup at Coeur d'Alene.

Yeah, and there was an interesting story behind it. We used nitrous oxide. We used it before, but at that time we really used it. I won the first time, and the second heat I kind of lucked out, I won. In the final heat, I couldn't start the engine. Before the A and B heats the water got so rough they stopped. So the guys come to me, say, "Hey, Mira, you have your bi-plane, why don't you put a show on?" I said, "In other words, you want me to fly airplane, the boats cannot run because it's windy. The wind's blowing so hard and you want to fly airplane?" They said, "Yeah, if you can." I said, "This is not a very good one." So they got a sheriff and a helicopter. They picked me up, took me to the airport. Jump in the airplane, did the air show. It was very uncomfortable. Then I went back. Brought me over to the pits, then to the

boat, and I couldn't start the boat. Everybody was already out. It was five minute gun already gone. I was there six, seven minutes. They knew I had to struggle to start. So what happened, the nitrous valve was seeping and getting the engine very rich, or whatever, and I couldn't start. So they got a mechanic, the other guys pulled me in. I had two or three minutes to go. So they got a mechanic and he did something on the carburetor and he said, "Start." I said, "If it starts are you going to jump overboard?" He did something, the engine starts with a minute-and-a-half to go. The guy jumped in the water. The engine starts, I took off open throttle, no warm-up. A little way back, they line up, I pick up the slack opening up, and I won. And then coming back, the sad part, I was far away, turned the mixture off but the engine was running. I had a choice, hitting a boat, hitting a hydroplane, and there was a ramp. I said, "I gotta take the ramp." I waved and screamed, "People, go away!" Go away so there's enough room. I parked it right up there, I got the rudder and the fin.

A lot of us were there that day.

Were you? (Laughs.) Some kid came by, says, "Can I have your autograph?" I was just shaking! But there was an expensive part. There was a nice fence between the boats and yachts. I said, "I'm not gonna hit that" I was only going 10, 15 miles an hour, just kind of plowing, but still could do lots of damage. It was a miracle there was a ramp up, I could park it up there.

Well, the next year you drove Miss Chrysler Crew. Bill Sterett got hurt in his 7-litre . . .

Yeah, I didn't want to drive it, I didn't like the boat when I drove it.



Above Mira Slovak and the U-3 *Tahoe Miss* wins the 1966 Detroit APBA Gold Cup. ~ Mr. Barney photo



Above the 1966 U-3 *Tahoe Miss* (3) on tilt at Coeur d'Alene. ~ Sandy Ross Collection photo

That was automotive power.

Yeah, Chrysler.

How was that boat to drive?

Oh, that was like a blown up limited, you know? Very, very uncomfortable.

It was a Lauterbach hull.

Yeah, I didn't care too much for that.

Just survival?

Yeah. I just tried to help Bill, because, "Mira, if you don't help I'm gonna lose my sponsor." I said, "Bill, I don't like the boat, I cannot do it. Probably get somebody else."

He said, "No, I cannot get nobody." So I said, "OK, I'll help you." So . . .

Yeah, yeah. And you had the airplane crash the following year, but that was the end of your racing career.

Yeah.

Now, how long did you race the Wee Wahoo, the small boat?

'58, until I left Mr. Boeing. I went to Continental Air Lines. I drove two years, '58, '59.

OK.

I raced with Bill Muncey. He was driving his 7-litre or 266, *Chevrolet*.

Did you see Tahoe Miss run with the Griffon?

I drove it once.

Oh, you did?

Yeah. I drove it in . . . when I ended up planting the glider, I stopped in Lake Mead and they'd been out there testing.

OK.

So I stopped and went for a ride. They had a problem with the quill shaft. They realigned it later on and they got it going. I think *Budweiser* got it going really well.

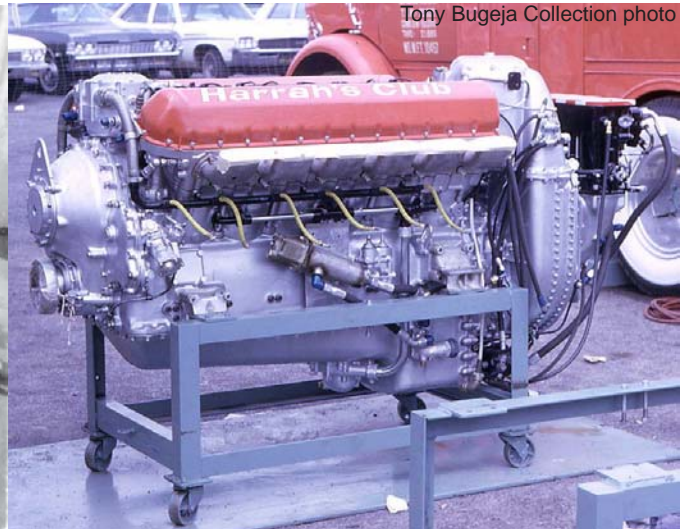
Yeah, they changed the quill shaft. They put a lot of money into that.



Mira standing in the cockpit of the U-77 Miss Chrysler Crew docked at Seattle. ~ Sandy Ross Collection photo



David Volpi photo



Tony Bugeja Collection photo

Above left on previous page is *Tahoe Miss* with the V-12 Griffon and V-6 Buick attached outside shop. ~ The Rolls-Royce Griffon engines ended up in Bill Harrah's U-1 *Harrah's Club*, then sold to Bernie Little, minus the V-6 Buick engines. ~ Sandy Ross Collection photo

Do you remember what model number the engines were?

I bought them in Australia, but really, I don't know. When I was driving for Mr. Harrah, *Tahoe Miss*, I thought of getting professional mechanics working so hard on top of the engine. Somebody told me there's a bunch of Griffons. So I jump on the airline and went to Australia. I remember Bankstown. And they had a bunch of Fireflies. You see them, looks like a so-long, blown up Spitfire. I bought 10 of them, \$200.00 apiece. And I bought the airplanes too, \$500.00 apiece. The Australians get the message and say, "Oh, the Yankees are trying to take our history away." So they kept the airplanes but they give us the engines. So we got the Griffon engines to run in *Tahoe Miss*.

Yeah.

It was 3,500 horses. They put it in the boat and I drove it, I drove it for a test in Lake Mead. It was the same time I flew the Atlantic in that glider. I was coming in, I drove the boat, went to see Mr. Harrah, say hello to him in Reno, just land and say hello. Then I went to air show in California and I crashed. That was the end of my driving.

Well, when you look back, how do you compare racing then with what you see today?

It's a different world. Number one, I'm prejudiced. To me, it was the highlight of anybody's life. It was the beginning of a trip. It's a completely different world. It's commercialized nowadays. The speeds were much lower than they are today. It was fun, it was enjoyment.

You sat in open cockpits. It's safer now.

There's no question about it. So many accidents, we had to do something. Modern technology. I've seen a guy practically torn apart with a boat flying all over. I said, "Oh, he's dead." And same evening he was drinking beer with us. He was hurt in the morning, he's out drinking. There were nurses and doctors and hospital. It's a terrific improvement. But somehow the noise and high roostertails and, uh, it's a different world. I liked the one which I lived in the past. I like it a little bit better. But again, gave me more reason, uh, great feeling that I was very thankful and very fortunate I was part of it, certainly. There was entertainment for people. People went crazy about it those days.

Yeah.

You could hear the Allison and Rolls engines five, 10 miles away. Everybody was shooting for the lake. Just practice going on. But modern technology and rules, I'm very thankful I that I was part of it.

Let us ask about one other famous driver from that era, Bill Cantrell. How do you remember him as a driver?

Bill was always there. Number one, he was very personable. He was very open hearted, helped everybody. He was loved by everybody. He was the oldest one.

Yeah.

If you got kids, he was a gentleman. And other drivers, great memories. Bill Cantrell. We talked about Bill Muncy, he kept by himself. And of course, a great driver was Bill Stead.

Yeah.

And Russ Schleeh. Thinking, Chuck, uh, who else was there? Norm Evans and . . . **Russ Schleeh is . . .**

Russ is 94. I had lunch with him for a long time, and he's fading away. (Schleeh died shortly after this interview was conducted – Ed.)



Above from left to right, Bill Cantrell 1964, Bill Muncey 1958, and Russ Schleeh in 1957. ~ H&RM Collection photos

Do you still keep in touch with some of them?

Oh, yes, I see Russ. He still reminds me, and his memory's kind of fading away, he says, "I can remember being cut off." I said, "I never cut anybody in my life!" He said, "You liar." (Laughter.) So we laugh about it. That was one of the greatest. And Bill Stead, who didn't like Bill?

Yeah.

Loveable guy. Always friendly, always, uh, he fought like a dog outside, but for Schleeh and the other guys, besides Bill Muncey, it was lots of fun. Bill was very good. And Russ, when he was running good, he was special.

And Jack Regas.

Oh, Jack Regas. I thought he was untouchable the first time I saw him. That is the history, it's fading away. The loss is that the show, the people who we make the show for, most of them gone. That's about what it's like . . . Today, the grandchildren say, "Oh, my grandpa was talking about it, or my mother was saying it." I was flying a DC plane to Hawaii one time in the '80s and a young, good looking girl was a hostess. She said, "Listen, I would like to talk to Mira." She made an announcement, and then this is your captain speaking. She was 27. And my accent, I didn't want to let them know (make the passengers think – Ed.) we were going to Cuba, so the co-pilot spoke and anyway, he mentioned my name and she said, "Oh, hi, Mira. I'd like to talk to him." I said, "Oh, good looking girl!" I go out, she said, "Mr. Slovak, I would like to let you know my mother was in love with you." (Hearty laughter.) So time has changed.

Yeah.

And we change with it. But the memories are still there. Fortunately it is a really nice part of the people in Seattle. It is a little more push and help with the museum, 'cause the museum is the last chance of memories in the past, like David (Williams), he's the Director, memories of the past especially when you see the *Wahoo* and the *Thriftway* here. It's terrific.

Yeah.

It's too bad they don't have another two or three engines so they could play with one. It's hard to get them now. It's a terrific tribute to the history of unlimiteds.

All right. Well, thank you very much.

OK.

Editor's note: About three weeks before Slovak died, David Williams spent several days with him recording extensive memories of his life. The recordings will form the basis for a biography of Slovak that Williams is writing. It may be a few more months before the book is ready, but we anxiously await its publication.



Above left is Norm Evans in 1958. ~ Sandy Ross Collection photo; At right is Bill Stead in 1957. ~ Joann Bower photo

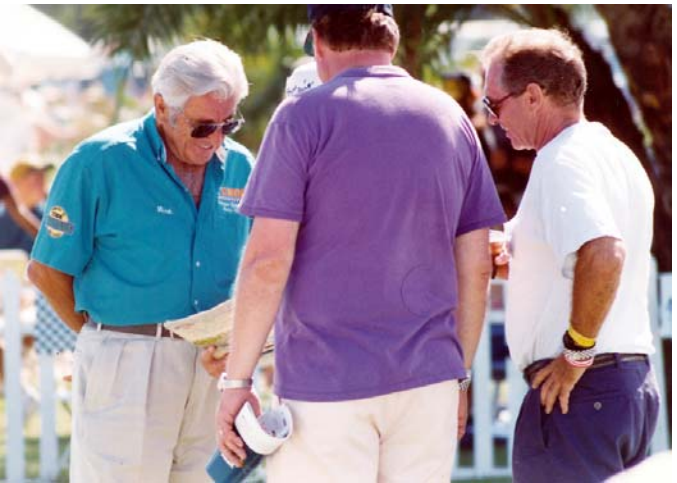


Above left Jack Regas and Mira Slovak in Seattle in 1958. ~ H&RM Collection photo-At right Mira Slovak and Jack Regas at Seattle in 2011. ~ Karl Pearson photo

1993; Mira Slovak Visits Seattle

In 1993 Mira Slovak came to Seattle's Texaco Cup on Lake Washington to watch the race, talk with friends, and sign autographs for fans. At right and below he is wearing an Exide shirt; Owner Mike and Lori Jones U-9 *Miss Exide* boat. Though there was no *Miss Wahoo*, *Miss Burien*, *Miss Bardahl*, *Tahoe Miss*, or *Miss Chrysler Crew* restored and drivable yet from the Hydroplane & Raceboat Museum, the restored U-37 *Slo-mo-shun V* did run on Lake Washington that year. ~ Steve Lane photos





2008-2009; Building the replica U-77 Miss Wahoo



Above left is the upside down U-77 *Miss Wahoo* replica getting a new aluminum bottom August 2008. At right the team working on the deck in April of 2009. ~ Karl Pearson photos; Bottom left is a stern look with some of the hardware and new deck on the *Miss Wahoo*. At right a bow shot of *Miss Wahoo* with deck being sanded May of 2009~ Michael Prophet photos





Above left *Miss Wahoo* on the floor in May of 2009 At right the restored U-77 *Miss Wahoo* in July. ~ Michael Prophet photos

Christening *Miss Wahoo*

The replica U-77 *Miss Wahoo* was finished and christened at Stan Sayres Park 7/09. Below left the U-77 *Miss Wahoo*, the team that did all the work, and David Williams. At right, another photo with the crew, Mira Slovak, Scott Carson, Bill Boeing, David Williams, and others. ~ Karl Pearson photos.



Below, left Scott Carson with a champagne bottle with Mira Slovak beside him, and Dave Williams at far right. The replica U-77 *Miss Wahoo* was driven first by Dave Williams shortly after christening. seen at right. ~ Michael Prophet photos





Above left are Bill Boeing Jr. Dr. Randy Pillow, and Mira Slovak. ~ Lon Erickson photo. At right, Dr. Pillow, Ron Jones Sr., and Mira Slovak. ~ Karl Pearson photo.



Below left, Stan and Chip Hanauer were also on hand. ~ Michael Prophet photo. In the cockpit of the U-77 *Miss Wahoo* is Mira Slovak, with Chip Hanauer, Dave Williams, and Scott Carson kneeling behind him. ~ Craig Fjarlie photo. Below the U-77 *Miss Wahoo* ran with the U-787 *Boeing* at Seafair that year. At left Chip Hanauer and *Boeing* heads out on the course while Dave Williams prepares to fire up *Miss Wahoo*. At right *Miss Wahoo* leads *Boeing* on final lap of the exhibition run. ~ Ed Clark photos



2010; Mira Slovak & Vintage Hydroplanes at Lake Coeur d'Alene, Idaho's Diamond Cup



There were three vintage hydroplanes at Coeur d'Alene; H&RMs U-77 *Miss Wahoo* replica, Vashon Unlimited's replica U-60 *Miss Thriftway*, and Dixon Smith's U-40 *Miss Bardahl* (3). Above the crew moves *Miss Wahoo*. At right the three boats in the pits. At bottom Mira Slovak takes a seat in *Miss Bardahl*. Dixon Smith is standing next to Mira seated in the cockpit ~ Chris Denslow photo.



2011; Mira Slovak & Jack Regas Return to Seattle

At right Mira Slovak and Jack Regas autograph a photo that is on the bottom left of page 10 of this issue. Jack's daughter Sharon is at the right. ~ Karl Pearson photo



At center Mira Slovak with a big grin and in his element, behind the wheel of *Miss Wahoo* once again. ~ H&RM Collection photo



Below left, Mira Slovak heads out of the quill shaft lagoon for a run on Lake Washington. ~ Karl Pearson photo - At right Mira Slovak and the U-77 *Miss Wahoo* returns to the dock after their speed run.



2011; Some Old Timers Show Up at Seafair

There were a lot of well known vintage hydroplanes and people at Seafair in 2011. It was great to see them all. Sadly, Mira Slovak and Jack Regas have passed on, never to return. They will be missed. Below from the left, Art Oberto, Mira Slovak in Peter Orton's racing suit and helmet, Bill Boeing Jr., Mira and Wil Muncey, and Fred Alter.

~ Karl Pearson photos





Above left is Ron Jones Sr. and to the right a photo of Bill Boeing Jr., Ron Jones Sr., Dave Williams, Mira Slovak, and Dr. Randy Pillow with significant others. Center left, Bill Wurster and Bill Schumacher who were also on hand to watch. ~ Karl Pearson photos; Below right is Bill Boeing Jr. and Mira Slovak at the Hydroplane & Raceboat Museum Gala. ~ Chris Tracy photo



Below left is Mira in the U-77 Miss Wahoo about to take off. At right Mira returns smiles and all with Dave Williams waving at the large crowd. ~ Karl Pearson photos.





HydroFile
Lon Erickson

U-1 Oberto/Madison – refresh of the “Shark” paint scheme has recently been completed at the Madison shop. ~ Tyler Hanson photo



U-7 Team Porter Racing - John Walcker named crew chief for the U-7

Graham Trucking race team. Team Porter owner **Ted Porter** announced “John knows our program very well, and he’s been a crew chief before,” Porter said. “So when we had a need to fill one of our crew chief positions, we didn’t hesitate to ask John. His experience working with U-7 driver **Jesse Robertson** and U-5 crew chief **Tom Anderson**, too, was seen as valuable as we get ready for the 2015 season.” Walcker has been deeply involved in unlimited



hydroplane racing for more than a decade, working on **Ed Cooper’s** U-3, as co-owner and crew chief of the U-57 *Miss Fedco* in 2012-13, and with Team Porter Racing on the U-57 2010-11 and with the team working on both boats in 2014. ~ Bio 300 photo



U-9 Jones Racing – Scott Liddycoat’s cockpit is getting it’s final touches before their spring testing. At left, the U-9 cockpit work. ~ U-9 Facebook photo



gbr/U-11 Peters & May – The *Peters & May* hull in the process of getting a refresh to her paint scheme and engine work continues in preparation for Madison. ~ gbr/U-11 Facebook photos



U-12 Miss DiJulio – Centurion Racing has added new associate sponsors, Windermere Real Estate and San Gennaro Foods to the U-12.



Work continues at the Centurion Racing shop getting prepared for spring testing and the 2015 season. ~ Centurion Racing photos

U-27 Wiggins Racing – The newest team on the H1 circuit is in the process of getting their new paint scheme completed. The hull shown here is prepped for painting. ~ U-27 Facebook photos



U-96 Spirit of Qatar – Hull updates to the U-96 are complete and systems going back into the hull, prepping for the spring testing. Bottom left **David Heye** working in the Ellstrom shop. At right **Rick Corella** and **Trevor Hanson** workin on the gearbox. ~ Ellstrom facebook photos





Above left **Mike Hanson** working on the rudder and rear uprights. At upper the rear uprights and cowling in shop. At right repairs are done to the U-96. ~ Ellstrom Facebook photos

U-100 Leland Unlimited – Owner Stacy Briseno

announced plans for the team to compete in 2015, starting in Madison. She selected veteran inboard driver **Kevin Eacret** to handle the driver duties this season. In addition, **Ben Rice** has been named crew chief, along with a portion of the team from last year returning. Work has already begun getting the hull and equipment that ran in 2014, ready for this coming season. Below left is a 2014 shot of the U-100.~ Lon Erickson photo; At right a photo of Kevin Eacret



Over the winter months there has been speculation and discussion over developments and changes that occurred within the structure of the QMSF – Qatar Marine Sports Federation, which was the sanctioning organization of the Oryx Cup, and the new organization, Qatar Sailing & Water-Sports Federation.



الإتحاد القطري للرياضات البحرية
Qatar Marine Sports Federation

The latest from H1 Chairman Steve David;

Winds of political change over Qatar

Over the past six years our sport has had the privilege of getting to know Sheikh Hassan Bin Jabor Althani, or simply “Hassan”.

During this time, Hassan bridged the cultural differences between the Mid East and the West. He did so in a positive manner that made friends of complete strangers. I can’t imagine a finer Ambassador for acceptance, peaceful co existence and respect for all cultures.

Sadly the political environment has changed in Qatar, and Hassan is no longer the President of the QMSF. Although we have four years remaining on our contract, the new leadership has cancelled not only our contract, but all motor sports agreements they had with the World racing authorities, including NHRA, F1 outboard, J stock outboard, Offshore and Unlimited.

Unfortunately the previous leadership of H1 accepted a 30 day termination provision, and we must honor that agreement. In the normal course of business, contracts have an “out” for force majeure (acts of God, or actions not caused by the parties). While the minister of Youth and Sports could exercise their 30 day notice, it does raise questions about any hopes they have for hosting an Olympic event or their proposed FIFA World Cup.

Perhaps the political winds will change again, and a new leader of Hassan’s caliber will emerge. We can only hope, as Hassan was not only unique as a world citizen, he was a man of honor. Let us not blame Qatar for this decision, for it is but a few who made the decision. In the meantime Dave Holley, CEO of London based Peters and May is working diligently on a replacement for the Doha race.

This is obviously a hurdle we must overcome. Some will take delight in this setback. Those few are the denizens of the web who have accomplished nothing and thrive on gossip and other’s misfortune. It is not for them we race.

We race for you, our friends, our loyal fans, our sponsors and for the spirit that thrives in the best of competition.
Steve David

May 22nd, 2015



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