



SWAMI SEZ: A season of change in 2017.

by Brian Anderson

This short season will be marked by change. With a new chairman, attorney Doug Bernstein at the top replacing Steve David, the years of sticking to the same format for all races comes to a close. The sport will step out into uncharted waters to hopefully find a spark to attract new fans by this change up.

With the season still sitting at a scant four sites, plus a scheduled a four-boat shootout in Madison, there will be five races with the doubling up in Detroit, which will stage both the President's Cup on Saturday and the Gold Cup on

Sunday. The two back-to-back races in August will mean more heats and points for the boats attending. The Madison opener, still the first weekend in July, in a move in part due to finances, will invite only four boats and not be a H1 points event.

The remaining sites of Tri-Cities, Seattle, and San Diego will hold "traditional" races and Tri-Cities will again run an extra set of heats in more of a traditional Gold Cup-style format. So what will this do for the teams? Simply put, if you aren't invited to Madison, you have more time to prepare for the Tri-Cities event the last week in July.

The good news is that despite the limited number of races, the competition should be quite good, with Jimmy Shane being regarded as the favorite to defend his title in the U-1 *Miss HomeStreet Bank* based out of Madison, Indiana. Defending Albert Lee Cup champion, Andrew Tate, returns in the Jones Racing U-9 with primary sponsor Les Schwab Tires and is a legitimate contender for the title.

The newly renumbered U-12 (former U-5) has changed owners with Rob Graham purchasing the former *Budweiser* hull from Ted



Porter. J. Michael Kelly will again drive and be considered in the championship conversation. A big question mark is Ellstrom Racing's U-16, which sported the Oberto colors for two races last season with Jean Theoret driving. Plans have not been announced, but the boat is fast enough to win races.

Nipping at the heels of the title contenders are Cal Phipps in the U-27, which is owned by Milt and Charlie Wiggins and crashed in Madison last season, effectively ending its season. A rebuilt boat will return to the circuit from its

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My \$0.02 Worth

Editorial Comment



Andy
Muntz

I'm a Baby Boomer. What's more, I would guess that most of you reading this publication are Baby Boomers, too.

We're that big bulge in the population who are the children of the men and women who fought World War II and the Korean War. We watched "I Love Lucy" on a black-and-white TV, practiced air raid drills in the basements of our elementary schools, and remember phones with rotary dials.

For those of us growing up in the Pacific Northwest, we also were big fans of hydroplane racing. We were passionate about boats such as *Slo-mo-shun IV*, *Hawaii Ka'i*, and *Miss Wahoo* and idolized the likes of Bill Muncey, Jack Regas, and Mira Slovak.

But, let me tell you something, fellow Baby Boomers. I hope this doesn't hurt your feelings, but the sport that we grew up with no longer needs us.

Oh, they'd like us to remain fans and go to the races and stay involved, but our sport would

really rather grab the attention of those younger than us, such as our children. In fact, it needs to attract them in order to survive.

In last month's issue of the *NewsJournal*, you may have read that Seattle's KIRO-TV has decided that it will no longer broadcast the Seafair race live, a tradition that has lasted for 65 years. The station will instead offer a 90-minute special about the race that evening.

There was a time when we were kids that the TV stations would interrupt their regular programming to show a hometown boat make a qualifying attempt, but those days are now long gone.

Why did KIRO decide to make this change?

Because the advertisers who pay for the broadcast looked at the ratings and realized that the people that they most wanted to reach with their messages were not watching. More specifically, they wanted more viewers who are between the ages of 25 and 54, the people who buy the products they want to sell.

The same is no doubt true for the companies that are thinking about sponsoring the boats. They are spending money putting their name on a boat because they want to reach potential new customers. Those customers are not likely to be us Baby Boomers.

So, when we lament about our favorite sport and wish things were the way they used to be, we need to instead remove ourselves from the picture and look at the sport in a different way. We need to look at it through the eyes of our children.

We need to get it through our heads that the companies that might want to paint their name on a hydroplane, and thus pay the freight, aren't interested in reaching us. They want members of Generation X and the Millennials to be watching, two groups of people who look at motor sports in an entirely different way than those of us who can still remember the original seven astronauts.

EDITOR: Andy Muntz

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Craig Fjarlie, Chris Tracy, Dick Sanders

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

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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.

The U-5 team is sold to Rob Graham.

Ending months of rumor-mill speculation, Rob Graham confirmed in late April that he has purchased the U-5 hydroplane from Ted Porter. Graham now assumes a new role in the sport, having been involved in unlimited hydroplane racing for more than two decades

as the sponsor of several boats named Graham Trucking.

His new boat, the winner of last year's Gold Cup race, will be based south of Seattle in Milton, Washington. Graham also announced that the team will stay mostly intact. Tom Anderson will continue

as crew chief, while former U-7 crew chief John Walcker also will serve in the crew. J. Michael Kelly will return to the cockpit for the fourth consecutive season.

"I believe Mike to be the best unlimited hydroplane driver in the sport," Graham said. "He was our driver in 2004 as a rookie in the U-2 boat and got more out of the boat than anyone else had. He's been winning races consistently since getting the faster boat, so he's my guy.

"As for the rest of the team, it became clear that the only way to keep this outstanding team together was for me to take it over. That's why I purchased the T-6 and all the equipment that goes with it."

The T-6 hull was built for the legendary owner Bernie Little in 2000 and was the last hydroplane to carry the *Miss Budweiser* name.

The boat will compete in 2017 with the number U-12. "Twelve is the sum of five and seven," Graham said, referring to Ted Porter's team, which campaigned the boat both as U-5 and U-7. "It pays homage to the entire history of the hull." His racing operation will be formally known as U12 Racing LLC.

Graham is the owner and president of the Seattle-based company Graham Trucking, which he founded in 1983 to focus on the Alaska barge trade. The company became one of the early pioneers of heavy containerized cargo and now has one of the largest super-chassis fleets for its port and barge division as well as refrigerated and flatbed trucks dedicated to local short-haul of perishables.

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We love to hear from our readers.

In the February issue of Unlimited NewsJournal it was stated that Madison and Detroit were looking for a new format to enhance their regattas. I have come up with a format that I think will solve many of the problems that they might have.

Over the years, there has been a controversy whether a race should be determined by points over a number of heats or a winner-take-all final heat. If you have a points race, the final heat can be anti-climatic and spectators are left wondering why the first boat over the finish line in the final heat is not the race winner. If you have a winner-take-all final heat, you devalue the preliminary heats and a boat need only finish second or even third consistently to make the final heat. Nobody gets excited about boat racing for second place.

In my plan, in a 12-boat field, you should run four preliminary heats composed of three boats each, selected by draw. The winner of each preliminary heat would advance to a final heat: one for the winners, one for the second-place boats, and one for the third-place boats with the winner of the first-place heat winning the race and the winner of the second-place final getting a trophy, and, correspondingly, the winner of the third-place heat getting another trophy. This way, more people would be happy on the judge's stand at the conclusion of the competition.

This would be a very simple format for fans to follow. No more adding up points, just watch who comes in first. No more sandbagging in the preliminary heats. You either come in first or you are out of consideration for winning the race.

This gives a regatta seven heats of racing, as is presently the case. My plan provides a regatta with competitive racing for first place that fans can relate to. At least in the final heats, the boats will be evenly matched.

I ran this plan by Fred Farley and he said it was brilliant. I think my plan will spark a renewed interest in the sport and maybe a new golden era.

David Greene
Connell, Washington

Just read your most recent column and comments about boat names. Here's my thoughts. A boat should have only one name each season. The multiple-name game confuses the fans and destroys any brand loyalty—if that even exists anymore. Each team should be told to make their best deal and that's the name that goes on the boat, into race programs, over the PA, etc. Additional local sponsors could add their decal to the side, top, tail, but that would not change the boat's name.

Tim Matyn

A conversation with Don Ibsen, last surviving member of the Slo-mo team: Part Three

For the last two months, Don Ibsen, the last surviving member of the famous Slo-mo-shun racing team, has told us how he became a member of the Slo-mo-shun crew when he was a teenager and has reviewed some famous incidents in unlimited hydroplane racing during the early 1950s, such as the flip of Slo-mo-shun V in 1955 and the crash of Slo-mo-shun IV in 1956. This month, he talks about his career after the Slo-mo while on the crew of Hawaii Ka'i III and Miss Bardahl. The interview was conducted by Craig Fjarlie and Bob Senior at Ibsen's home on October 7, 2016.

In '57, the Ka'i was not as reliable in the early part of the season. They had a lot of breakdowns. What were some of the problems they were chasing early on, do you remember? Was it quill shafts?

That was certainly part of it. We were blowing engines, too. We were stretching rods. Um, of course now Regas is behind the wheel...

Yeah.

...no-fear Regas, you know. I can see Mike Welsch now saying, "Damn it, Jack, keep it below that, don't give 'em hell," you know. (Laughs.)

It came together at the Silver Cup. He won the last five races.

Yeah.

How much of the '57 season were you involved with?

The whole thing.

You went east?

Oh, yeah.

Was that like, no salary but...

Oh, we were all volunteers, yeah. Since we were talking about Hawaii Ka'i, Edgar Kaiser, for all his means, was the neatest guy in



The Hawaii Ka'i III

Jerry Bryant

the world to be a boss to work for. I mean, this guy would... Nina Hornsby was his secretary and anything that was in any newspaper, anywhere in the world that was about Hawaii Ka'i, she sent out a copy to every one of the crewmembers so we were constantly getting all this information. Come in packets. This came, and all the crewmembers got this and...

Gift of model boats?

Yeah. He had, I think, 50 of those things made. The crewmembers and all the accessory people

that were involved with this sport got one, too. Les Staudacher actually made those. His furniture manufacturing company.

Church pews.

Yeah, and I think they were, as I recall, something about he really wanted to get 'em out before Christmas. They came just about a day before Christmas in a nice little box. I guess there was something that was holding it up. Something kicked Staudacher into getting these things going faster and get 'em out for Christmas. They're just, you know, a really nice treasure.

In '57 when you won the Silver Cup, Fred Alter was tossed out of *Miss U.S. 1* at that race.

That's very likely, yeah.

We really wanted to ask about the Sahara Cup. *Thriftway, Too* was running well, finally, and he won the final heat. Do you remember that final heat battle?

Oh, boy, all I remember is it was hotter than hell.

The caption on a photo in the paper said, "The exhaust glowing, Thrifty's not slowing." It was getting late in the day, the sun was going down. *Thriftway, Too* won the final heat but, because it was as total points race, *Ka'i* won the race.

Ka'i won the race, yeah. Uh, October 12th and 13th, interesting it was later in the year. Actually, it gets hotter at that time of year down there than it does whenever we're hot up here. It kind of follows the sun. But, I was just looking here. This is *Hawaii Ka'i*, fastest lap,



Lon Erickson

The *Hawaii Ka'i* following a test run on Lake Washington.

fastest heat, fastest race. New records, all three levels. Interesting. Well, big crew and a driver who was fearless.

Um hmm.

He was absolutely fearless. That guy was something else. I mean, you talk about somebody that lives and dies boat racing, once he got it into his blood, I mean, he was just like a man on fire, you know?

Yeah.

He had something under him. Nobody's gonna beat him. But the *Thriftway* part, I can't specifically tell you. I was so focused on the *Ka'i* that I can't tell you what the *Thriftway* side was.

Miss Thriftway had crashed at the Governor's Cup.

Yeah, OK.

Then Brien Wygle and the *Too* got all the good equipment for the last race. He did win the final heat but he didn't win the race. You were in Madison, obviously, when *Thriftway* crashed and Muncey was hurt.

Tore the boat apart.

Yeah.

Pieces went flying.

After the season, the straightaway run on Lake Washington. There were reports the carburetor was packed...

Yes, yes, absolutely. The weather conditions, we were right at sea level. The dew point, the whole thing. We were carburetor



Bob Miller

Hawaii Ka'i driver Jack Regas (left) and crew chief Mike Welsch celebrate a race victory with a beauty queen.



Bob Miller

The crew of the *Hawaii Ka'i* in 1957. That's Don Ibsen standing sixth from the left, right behind driver Jack Regas and with George McKernan to his right.

freezing. It was causing detonation, is what it was doing, OK? Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop. Yeah, oh, yeah. So we got these freeze bags you put in the refrigerator. It was equivalent to that, only hot bags. We heated them and they were a granular material that we could just pack around the carburetor area, the intake, around the manifold. Just enough to keep the area warm for the run.

OK.

That was as true story.

So it wasn't packed in ice, then.

The other way around. Heat.

So, how did they do that?

Well, I can't tell you what they ... because they were in the bag. I didn't see the granules. All I saw was the empty fabric bags, with some kind of material. Obviously, absorbed heat well, held heat well.

So how did they heat the bags?

It was very flexible, you could bend 'em around.

How did they get the stuff hot?

Obviously we had some kind of a... I can't remember if it was a fired blower with a, you know, like a five-gallon drum, container. This flame-thrower was shooting off of that, or sitting on top, but it was something. It wasn't just like putting it on a range top. There was more heat than that.

That kept the carburetor warm.

Yeah, so it didn't detonate.

Regas blew an engine in one run.

OK, all right.

Was Welsch upset with him when that happened?

I'm trying to think, because I remember it happened. I remember the boat, bop, bop, bop (gestures) about three times, 'cause he was not going slow, he was up pretty fast. I can't honestly remember if that was a rod, or if that was carburetion. I can't remember what let go on that run.

He needed about five miles to get up to speed and then slow down, before they could turn him back.

You think about that, we went all the way from the bay, down in Houghton, which would be Yarrow Point, right at Kirkland, and the traps started completely beyond that and then of course they end up clear to the end, down at Kenmore.

What do you remember about the propeller that was used?

26-inch prop.

Two blade?

Yeah, yeah.



The *Hawaii Ka'i* in the Seattle pits for the 1958 Gold Cup.

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

So Mr. Kaiser decides not to race after '57.

That's right.

And then he let Mike Welsch have the boat for just the Gold Cup.

Yes. Now what happened there is Edgar came to Seattle before the Gold Cup, probably in late spring, I would guess. Brought the crew all together, Olympic Hotel, we had a dinner. A young lady was there who had written him a letter. I gained a copy of it. Her dad was on the race committee. So Edgar gets out this letter and it's very soulful, you know. *Hawaii Ka'i* is my boat. I'd love to see it run again. And he turned after reading that and he says, we're gonna run the Gold Cup. One race, you know. That was sort of his modus to go into it. She was, probably from Edgar's point of view, the generic person for fans.

Yeah.

She was kinda the tip of the iceberg. He said, "OK, these are the fans that are going to get to see *Ka'i* go again." So we put our blood, sweat, and tears into it. I think we set a bunch of records on that one, too.

Muncey sinks the Coast Guard picket boat.

Oh, my gosh, yeah, yeah.

That could've been 50 people dead on the log boom.

Well, nobody was killed on the Coast Guard boat. It actually sank. That boat saved the crowd.

At some point, after the *Ka'i* was done running, Regas tested *Miss U.S. 1*. Were you there for that?

No. I wasn't there when Regas drove the *U.S.*



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

The *Miss Bardahl* at the dock during the 1959 Apple Cup on Lake Chelan, Washington.

A lot of the *Ka'i* crew helped convert *Miss U.S.* from Allison to Rolls.

After '58 we pretty much disbanded the crew.

Did any of the *Ka'i* crew stay on and work with the U.S. crew?

Not aware of it, you know. All I know is I wasn't involved on anything. I went over to the...

***Bardahl*.**

'59 I was with *Bardahl*. Then after *Bardahl* I was over on the race committee, safety committee with George McKernan.

There was a question about maybe some hot fuel being used by *Miss U.S. 1*. Was that a Roy Duby project or something?

I don't know. Don't know.

In '59 when you were with *Bardahl*, did you go back east?

Yes, the whole circuit.

Regas drove.

Jack Regas initially. Then, you know, he crashed the hull and got hurt at Coeur d'Alene. I got some

pictures. My brother was over there. He's got an old Speed Graphic (camera). So after they brought the boat back and put it on the trailer, my brother's there with this Graphic and he got some pictures in the cockpit that was just very graphic of how Jack got rattled around in that hull. There again, he was running the *Bardahl*. Guess who steps forward to take care of his hospital bills?

Edgar Kaiser.

Yeah.

'Cause Ole didn't do anything.

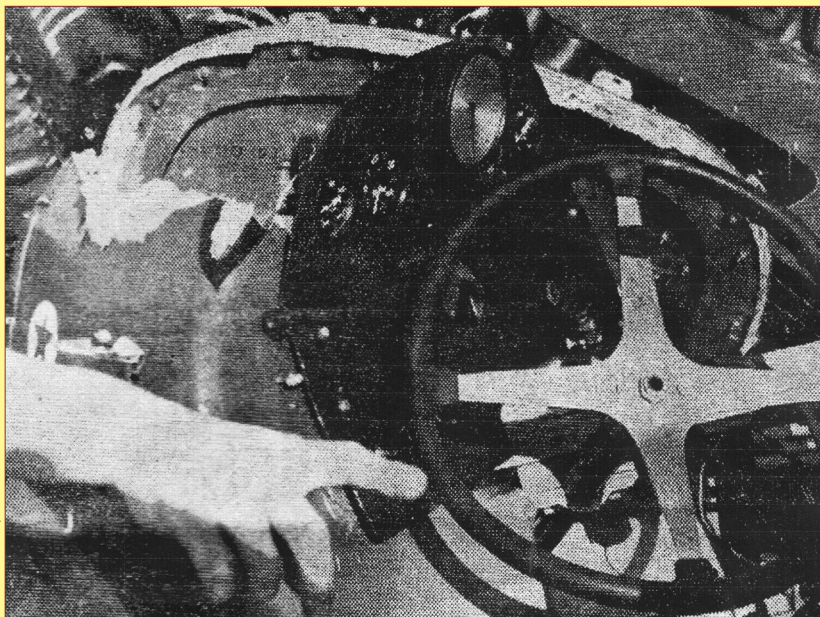
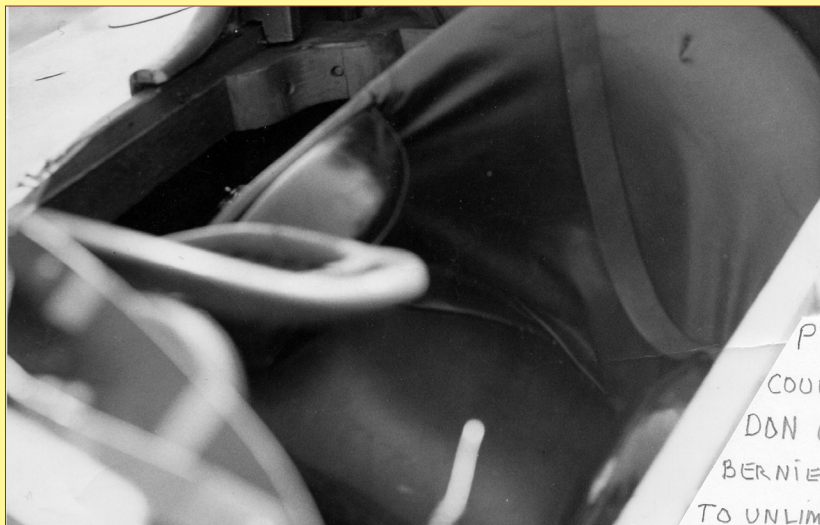
Jack was in the hospital for six weeks. Long time, long time.

'59 Detroit Memorial, *Supertest III* was a brand new boat.

OK.

Did *Miss Bardahl* beat it in one heat?

We had a string of engine problems with the *Bardahl* that year. We were blowin' engines left and right. I think we might've beat 'em in one of the heats.



Photos courtesy of Don Ibsen

On July 18, 1959, during the running of Heat 2A at the Diamond Cup on Lake Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, the *Miss Bardahl* hit the wake of another boat, which slammed Jack Regas so hard against the steering wheel that it fractured his skull and put him in a coma for nearly a month. Regas couldn't return to driving a hydroplane for eight years. [Top] Regas fires up the *Bardahl* to head out onto Lake Coeur d'Alene. [Middle] The cockpit looking toward the stem showing the crumpled steering wheel and seat. [Above] Another angle looking toward the bow.

Supertest III won the race.

Yeah, yeah. I can't tell you for sure. I can tell you this, though, about the *Bardahl*. Ole's resting in peace now, but we were using Bardahl oil, OK?

Why not, it's Miss Bardahl.

We were getting down to, are we blowing engines because this Bardahl oil isn't doing what we want it to do? So, we had a Bardahl five-gallon oil can with Mobil oil in it. We poured that into the engine. Looks like Bardahl oil, but it's Mobil. We're trying to figure out what's going on here and this was a black, black secret, I guess you could call it. It didn't seem to make any difference. We came in, it's not an oil problem, lubrication problem. I don't know if Ole ever knew about that. I don't think he ever heard about it.

Kinda hoping not.

We were getting desperate. We wanted to know what the hell is going on with this. We had some, we had, not a lot of, didn't like that set-up, '59 season.

Who else drove that year? Jim McGuire...

Jim McGuire. He was brought on for the rest of the season.

He clobbered a dock in Detroit. Then George McKernan drove it for a race or two at the end of the season.

He did, you're right, yeah. That wasn't a real successful campaign.

After the season with Miss Bardahl did you work on any other boats?

No. I got married, started having kids and I think I worked on the race committee. I think it was two

years. I was raising babies, living over in Kirkland. Rose Hill.

Were you an inspector at some point, helping McKernan?

Yeah, George and I were on Safety Committee.

What do you remember about some of the Detroit personalities?

Schoeniths had a place up on Lake Ontario that we as a crew were invited to. I can't remember if it was after the race was over, I think it was. Anyway, Joe and Lee took me out waterskiing.

You knew all about waterskiing.

Yeah, so that was kind of a plus. Uh, the Roostertail Restaurant is quite a neat place. We were there, and then next door to it is a place called...

Sindbad's.

Sindbad's, yeah. Is it still there?

It's still there.

We'd sit there and have beers, in Sindbad's.

How about interactions with Mira Slovak and Bill Boeing, Jr.

Somewhat. We went up as a crew, 'cause Boeing had his dock, like Sayres, by Leschi there. I remember we went up one time and, you know, we kind of hobnobbed around with the group there. But not a lot of interaction with Boeing or the crew.

You've been active crew, successful, race committee, step away from it, do you watch it on TV regularly, do you go to the races regularly?

Uh, right now in my life it we're out in the San Juans. I'm probably not gonna watch it. I'd like to watch it if I'm home, you know. I still have that blood, if you want to call it.

Boat people.

Boat people. The boat bug. Heh, heh, heh. The unlimited bug. But, you know, I enjoy the technology. I enjoy the improvement in the technology. In fact, going back to, gosh, I was back in Detroit with our crew, we were sitting around

having lunch or dinner one time and here I was a guy, probably 19, 20, 21, right in there. I drew out this thing on this piece of paper. I said, "You know, what you really need is this larger, deeper skid fin." And I had it figured right, that skid fin would be right in the center of gravity of the hull. And I said, "That thing, if you have a deeper, large skid fin, that's gonna hold the boat much better in the turn and you won't have all this sliding and fighting the sideways motion as well as the forward motion." Guess what's made the big thing in the turns for the boats?

Yeah, yeah.

Now, the canting in is a whole different level of that, OK? But I had that drawn out. Well, what's this young kid know? He doesn't know what the hell, you know? But I thought about that. I could see they needed something. I was thinking, you got a pin here and if you're locked to it, hold you in the water, you know. And they ran these little shallow fins, about like this (gestures). You look at the meat cleavers they got now.

They changed that and they changed the non-trip. They made it full-length instead of just a little piece at the end.

Well, what they've done, too, it used to be the non-trip this way (gestures), now they've got it this way (gestures). So you're widening the running surface out wider, too.

Yeah.

I mean, I understand all that stuff. But, in fact, you get as much in the corner. People say, "Look at the roostertail." That's the skid fin. And you know, you think of it, the



Bob Carver

The Miss Bardahl in 1959.

load is on that, you see the braces they got on there to hold that thing. The load that's on that fin is something else.

The rudders are on the right side instead of the left.

OK, all right.

You went to Coeur d'Alene in 2013. See an unlimited hydroplane race and no noise, different technology in the engine well. Still exciting?

I was very unimpressed with the course. From a fan's point of view, I mean, because they had to be off from the boathouses and the pit area, they were way the heck out there. They're too far out. And like, the reverse of that is in Pasco. So, I walked away from that race, I mean, it was nice to be there and watch it. 'Course, I've been watching the woosh boats now, you know. The technology's wonderful. You're not blowing engines, you know. The rate of continuing to finish is so much better now.

Did you have any interaction with media people, Bill O'Mara or...

Oh, he was here. I used to see him all the time when he was here in Anacortes. Bill was up here for a number of years. He just couldn't get away from that radio, you know. I'm trying to think of any other media people.

Keith Jackson?

Well, no. Of course, Keith honed his style on hydroplanes and then went on the network, you know.

Mike Rhodes was another guy from KING-TV and radio.

Yeah, I've got a lot of data on their stories about KING-TV and



The *Miss Bardahl* crew working on the engine of their boat while at the 1959 Gold Cup in Seattle.

Sandy Ross Collection

the cameras and all, the development. They were ahead of the industry on the long lens.

Hundred-inch lens or whatever they called it.

Yeah, they were way ahead of the industry.

One of the main mechanical problems way back in the '50s was the quill shaft. What do you remember about the work that was done to try to solve that problem?

All I know is that I think it was Western Gear, tooled up some custom quill shafts. The grade of steel, the heat-treating, the diameter, you know, whatever they could work with. I know they built up some custom ones. I think that did help solve the problems.

As a wrap up, did you know some of the other people who were just getting into racing in the '50s?

Billy Schumacher. His dad was water skiing with my dad. They started a group together, you know.

He was in the Roostertail Syndicate with Stoen, Ausland...

Yeah, that's the north end Seattle guys... I knew Bill and, I mean, my dad and Bill Schumacher, Sr. Of course, his dad started the bakery. Bill, Sr.'s dad started it. It was Frederick Schumacher, something like that. But anyway, back in, let's see, I have to think about this now, early '30s, my dad went to work for Carnation Company. Billy's dad, Bill Schumacher, Sr., was working for Carnation, OK? They made milk delivery with the ice bags around the milk and all that. So Bill Schumacher, he's got my dad training him on the job. He comes in to Ballard with this one little house and he says, "This lady that sits on this porch up there, she's always combing her hair on this kinda sun porch. You ought to go talk to her some time and see if you can get a date with her." Heh, turned out to be my mom. All these stories, the connectivity, you know. So my dad married that lady that Bill Schumacher was pointing out to him.

The Swami prognosticates.

Continued from page 1

homeport in Alabama.

The only piston boat should be back with Jimmy King driving. The U-3 of Ed Cooper is always a fan favorite. Also looking racy in 2016 was the U-21, driven by Brian Perkins and owned by Greg O'Farrell. The team hopes for more improvement in 2017.

The U-11 of Scott and Shannon Raney find themselves without a sponsor for the first time in years after the exit of long-time backers Peters & May boat transport. The

underachieving team needs some consistency and hope to find improved performance after rebuilding their other boat during the off-season.

Last year's black *Miss Rock*, owned by Stacy Briseno, was a nice surprise last season with a multitude of some good performances and should be a steady performer.

The hard-working team of Bucket List Racing, owned by Kelly Stocklin, spent the offseason doing all kinds of modifications as well as

applying a snazzy new orange paint job. But, will the gearbox finally work consistently and the light craft be stable and fast enough to compete?

And, then there are a couple of projects involving a V-16 and a rotary engine, which is encouraging for the future but have yet to yield fruit. But, stay tuned. All of this could sink in a hurry or there may just be some excitement generated.

Here's how the Swami sees the 2017 season:

1) U-1 Miss HomeStreet Bank



Lon Erickson

Driver: Jimmy Shane, 14 career wins
Owner: City of Madison, Indiana, 27 career wins
Home: Madison, Indiana

SWAMI SEZ:

This will be the team to beat. Winner of three out of five in 2016 and they show no signs of letting up. Should be top qualifier at five of the scheduled six events and will win at least three. Crew chief of the year Dan Hoover will have the boat well prepared when the season opens with the hometown event in Madison.

2) U-9 Les Schwab Tires



Chris Denslow

Driver: Andrew Tate, 1 career win
Owner: Mike and Lori Jones, 3 career wins
Home: Kent, Washington

SWAMI SEZ:

Surprise winner of the Albert Lee Cup at Seafair, Andrew Tate is poised to move this team up a notch or two with increased support from Les Schwab. Will probably not be top qualifier at any event, but will win heats consistently and should surprise no one with another victory. If they avoid any breakage, they will finish nipping at the heels of the U-1.

3) U-12 Graham Trucking

Chris Denslow



Driver: J. Michael Kelly, 7 career wins
Owner: Rob Graham, 0 career wins
Home: Milton, Washington

SWAMI SEZ:

A fast boat now with a sponsor who decided to jump in and become the owner as well. J Michael is a proven winner and should see at least one victory and will most likely be the number two qualifier at most events. Should see them in every final and it would be no big surprise if they win the whole thing if the top dog falters.

4) U-27 Wiggins Racing

Lom Erickson



Driver: Cal Phipps, 0 career wins
Owner: Wiggins Racing, 0 career wins
Home: Gadsden, Alabama

SWAMI SEZ:

The 2013 Gold Cup-winning hull was extensively damaged following a crash in Madison in 2016. Now completely rebuilt, expect a fast, consistent hull being in four of six final heats and should place as high as second at a race. No sponsors have been named as of press time.

5) U-3 “The Turbinator”

Bill Orsborne



Driver: Jimmy King, 0 career wins
Owner: Ed Cooper, 4 career wins
Home: Evansville, Indiana

SWAMI SEZ:

The piston boat from Indiana continues on as a fast addition to any race. Its age may be showing, but will post speeds to compete with the upper half of the fleet. Jimmy King is still one of the best unlimited drivers who has never won a race. A victory this season would be an upset. Should see Griggs Ace Hardware on the boat in Tri-Cities.

6) U-21 Go Fast, Turn Left Racing

Chris Denslow



Driver: Brian Perkins, 0 career wins
Owner: Greg O'Farrell, 0 career wins
Home: Maple Valley, Washington

SWAMI SEZ:

After discarding plans to finish a new hull, the team is confident this craft can run with the top dogs. The speeds should increase from last season and the boat should be in at least half of the final heats this season. The team has committed sponsors for the Northwest races and talks are ongoing for sponsors elsewhere. Payne West Insurance is stepping up its support and will make testing in the Tri-Cities possible for the team.

7) U-16 Ellstrom Racing

Bill Osborne



Driver: J. W. Myers, 1 career win
Owner: Ellstrom Family, 29 career wins
Home: Seattle, Washington

SWAMI SEZ:

Family decisions and business commitments will determine the extent of the team's involvement this year. Plans at press time are unannounced and fluid, but the possibility of a two-race season at Tri-Cities and Seattle seems possible. If they race, expect the boat to be the fastest qualifier, it should score well, and be a real threat to win the races it enters.

8) U-99.9 Leland Racing

Lon Erickson



Driver: Kevin Eacret, 0 career wins
Owner: Stacy Briseno/Leland Racing, 20 career wins
Home: Kirkland, Washington

SWAMI SEZ:

A decent season in 2016 should set the stage for an equally good 2017. This popular team will have the most fun! Should see KISW/CarStar and the black paint scheme again.

9) U-11 Unlimited Racing Group

Lon Erickson



Driver: Tommy Thompson, 0 career wins
Owner: Scott Raney, 0 career wins
Home: Edmonds, Washington

SWAMI SEZ:

Although the team had a decent hull and a competent driver, the boat has been incredibly inconsistent for the last couple of seasons. This team should show a lot better as they are changing boats to a newly rebuilt hull (#9302), which the Raney's purchased from Ken Muscatel to start their team in 2011. A sponsor hunt is on.

10) 440 Bucket List Racing

Melissa Fey



Driver: Dustin Echols, 0 career wins
Owner: Kelly Stocklin, 0 career wins
Home: Sammamish, Washington

SWAMI SEZ:

Their driver needs to qualify, which could prove problematic with this small, light hull. The June Tri-Cities testing session will reveal lots about the quality of the rebuilt boat. May be there to pick up the left overs when others can't perform. Will most likely be slowest qualifier and finish most heats if the gear-box holds, but will not challenge for wins.

11) U-57 Spirit of Detroit

Lon Erickson



Driver: Unknown
Owner: Ted Porter (campaigned in Detroit by Dave Bartush), 1 career win
Home: Decatur, Indiana

SWAMI SEZ:

Will Dave Bartush campaign this hull again for the double in Detroit? Lets hope so.

12) U-14 Centurian Racing

Karl Pearson



Driver: Patrick Sankauer, 0 career wins
Owner: Jay Leckrone, 0 career wins
Home: Burien, Washington

SWAMI SEZ:

A Devel piston V-16 twin-turbo aluminum billet engine by Steve Morris Engines of Muskegon, Michigan, is reportedly going into this hull, but will not be ready for this season.

13) U-8 Racing

Lom Erickson



Driver: Eric Christensen?
Owner: 12 people listed as members
Home: Buckley, Washington

SWAMI SEZ:

The old *Miss Freei* world record hull is now being outfitted with a rotary engine sporting twin turbos. Most recent news is this team will not compete in 2017. Further development on the engine program has forced them to wait until 2018.

BOATS WHERE ART THOU?

U-7 (former Graham Trucking II)

Chris Denslow



Driver: Unknown
Owner: Ted Porter, 18 career wins
Home: Decatur, Indiana

SWAMI SEZ:

After the sale of the primary Porter Racing hull U-5/12 (T-6) to Rob Graham, the future of the old *Budweiser* T-5 hull, still owned by Ted Porter, is unknown. Will we see it appear in 2017?

U-37 (former Beacon Plumbing)



Lon Erickson

SWAMI SEZ:

Would be a good runner, if only...

Driver: Unknown

Owner: Billy and Jane Schumacher, 4 career wins

Home: Seattle, Washington

U-22 Webster Racing



Webster Racing

SWAMI SEZ:

A good starter package if you want to break into the unlimited ranks.

Driver: Mike Webster, 0 career wins

Owner: Webster Family, 0 career wins

Home: Reading, Pennsylvania

Former hydroplane promoter passes away.

Once one of Seattle's most colorful sports media personalities, and for a time the promoter of unlimited hydroplane racing, J Michael Kenyon passed away on April 26 in Port Orford, Oregon. He was 73 years old.

Kenyon was the Seattle P-I's first beat writer for the Seattle Supersonics in 1967 and for the Seattle Mariners in 1977. But, he also was known for his many antics. He either quit or was fired from the Seattle P-I four times.

He also was the city's second sports radio talk show host. He was known for surprising his guests with embarrassing questions.

After his newspaper career, he became an expert in horse racing and was so involved in promoting professional wrestling that he was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

His involvement in promoting hydroplane racing occurred during the mid- to late-1990s when Bill Doner was commissioner of the sport.



National Wrestling Hall of Fame

Around the Circuit

Race Site News



Chris Tracy

“Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party,” was uttered by Patrick Henry. But, for the 2017 H1 season, unlimited fans should exclaim, “**Now is the time for all good unlimited hydroplane fans to come to the aid of their sport.**”

While there is some good news, bad news and—as I write this—some loose ends to connect, it is clear that the success or failure of the 2017 season will almost certainly dictate the future of unlimited hydroplane racing. More than ever, it is important for fans to rally behind the sport and attend 2017 race events, bring friends and family with you, tell sponsors that a reason you patronize them is due to their involvement with unlimited racing, and to stay positive.

Fans need to forget about what got us to this point of only four race-points venues; we can’t change the past. (Technically there are five races for points if one counts two races, on one weekend, in Detroit.) The constant blaming chatter will not move the sport forward and, instead, fans should support—maybe even demand—innovation and trial and error changes in the sport. It’s a whole lot easier to sell sponsorship when races have a record of good attendance.

So, let’s take a look at the 2017 season.

On June 2, there will be a West Coast test session in **Tri-Cities** (Richland, Pasco, Kennewick),

Washington. Many boats are likely going to test, including the U-1 *HomeStreet Bank*, U-9 *Les Schwab Tires*, U-12 *Graham Trucking*, U-21 Go Fast Turn Left (Payne West Insurance/Albert Lee Appliance), 440 Bucket List, and the Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum’s newly restored, vintage, *Pay ‘n Pak*. This is a good chance to get up-close to the boats.

The East Coast test session will be in **Guntersville**, Alabama, on June 17. A goal of this session is to give the community a look at unlimited boats running in preparation for a full race in 2018. The U-1 *HomeStreet Bank* and the U-27 Wiggins Racing will likely test.

June 30 to July 3 are the dates for the **Madison**, Indiana, non-points event. The Grand Prix World boats will race, too. The hope is that four unlimited boats will race in round-robin, two-boat, heats. The U-1 *HomeStreet Bank* and the U-27 Wiggins Racing are confirmed to attend; the U-9 Raney’s Unlimited Racing Group may attend if they reach an agreement with the Madison race, and the Madison race president has said the U-9 *Les Schwab Tires* will attend.

The Madison race is running the event this way to save money, after suffering setbacks due to bad weather in recent years. Unlimiteds have raced a similar format in Valleyfield, Quebec, and on Firebird Lake, Arizona, years back. Some feel that the format may have future potential, especially if there

are more boats participating, as it would provide more racing and less down time. There are significant financial issues at this race site and all are hopeful it will come together, but as I write this piece, I’d have to categorize this as a “tentative event.” Expect WORX radio to stream audio race coverage.

The HAPO Columbia Cup will be held July 28 to 30 in **Tri-Cities**, Washington. The HAPO Credit Union returns as title sponsor for both the unlimited race and air show. (HAPO stands for Hanford Atomic Products Operations.) Expect the largest crowd on the beach of any race in the season and one of the best-organized races on the circuit. KNDU-TV will cover the race live on TV and streams the race on the Internet.

The Tri-Cities Water Follies are committed to more racing, so the HAPO Columbia Cup race format includes more heats, similar to a traditional Gold Cup format. The 5-liter boats, Grand Prix World boats, and the vintage hydroplanes will support the H1 racing. A dash-for-cash heat for each class will be held on Friday, too. A robust air show rounds out the show. Don’t forget that hydros will also be on display at the Columbia Mall in Kennewick on July 27 to promote the race. It’s a good chance for fans to get up-close to the boats.

Albert Lee Appliance returns as the title sponsor the unlimited race in **Seattle**, August 4 to 6. Boeing

will sponsor the air show that includes the Blue Angels and Graham Trucking is the title sponsor for the Grand Prix World race. Fans will be happy that the Captain's Club is back, which includes food, drink, pit pass, and an exceptional view of the race.

Unfortunately, KIRO-TV will not cover the race live this year, but will have a 1.5-hour Seafair Festival recap on TV Sunday evening. Expect the largest total attendance for any race of the season, due to the exceptionally long log boom where large and small boats tie up and boat passengers view the race, in addition to the fans on the shore.

Two races on one weekend will be held in **Detroit** from August 25 to 27. In an exciting and innovative twist, Detroit will host the President's Cup on Saturday and the Gold Cup on Sunday. There will be separate qualification sessions for the President's Cup and another for the Gold Cup on Friday, including a late-afternoon/early-evening session. The plan is for two sets of heats on Saturday, followed by the President's Cup final.

Sunday will be three sets of heats followed by a final race for the Gold Cup. The traditional Gold Cup format was modified to allow a separate race on Saturday; there will be three sets of heats on Sunday followed by the Gold Cup final heat. The goal is to provide more value for spectators over all days. The Detroit races welcome the Metro Detroit Chevrolet Dealers (MDCD) as the title sponsor for both races!

HomeStreet Bank is expected to return for the second year as the title sponsor of the unlimited race in **San Diego**, September 15 to 17. A full schedule of other classes racing

always supports the unlimited race. With at least three boat teams vying to win the national point and driving championships, the competition at this season-ending race should be fierce. This fast racecourse will be the only race on salt water this season.

Etcetera.

There is no H1 information to report on offers made last season by Oberto, including funding from Art Oberto, or support from HomeStreet Bank to help promote and transform the sport.

Rule changes and H1 race streaming for Madison, Detroit, and San Diego and/or Internet details are some of the loose ends that have yet to be tied. And, I think I speak for most fans, we all hope that rules promote safety and spectator-friendly racing. Fans need to know quickly who won each heat and should know the race winner before they leave the race site.

Fans ... Do your job in 2017. Buy tickets and attend races. Bring friends and support sponsors that provide products and services you can use. Be positive.

Owners ... Get together to promote the sport and not just individual interests in 2017. Some owners need to look for reasons to race, rather than searching for reasons not to race. Stop the endless appeals. Ramp up your team's Internet and social media presence and keep fans clued into what is happening with your team.

Race Sites ... Look for ways to promote the best fan experience possible. Some sites need to improve and frequently update their social media and Internet presence—don't let it stay dormant

for months. Look for ways to attract more spectators: contests, give-aways, meet/greet/sit-in-the-boat sessions, boats on display shortly before the race, contact media and arrange interviews, and don't wait for the media to come to you, etc.

H1 ... More clearly establish priorities, execute a plan to grow the sport and communicate it well to all stakeholders. Rule enforcement needs to be consistent. H1 and race sites need to work together on common goals that support boat teams and the fans that watch them. H1 needs to better coordinate their Internet coverage with their social media presence.

The U-5 team is sold to Graham.

Continued from page 3

Graham Trucking began sponsoring hydroplanes in 1987 when the company's name was painted on the side of Jerry Hopp's limited-class boat. Graham sponsored Hopp through many classes of race boats and then eventually sponsored an unlimited for the first time in 1997.

During the company's career as a sponsor of unlimiteds, its boats have collected a total of 15 race victories and won a national championship in 2013.

"Ted Porter set a very high standard for his team," Graham said. "His contributions to the sport are second to none and he should be recognized for that. It will be one of our goals to uphold those standards and drive even higher."

HydroFile

Race Team News



Lon Erickson

U-1 Miss HomeStreet Bank

Preparations have wrapped up in the Madison, Indiana, shop after an extensive hull update over the winter. Included in the rebuild was carbon fiber work on the decks, lightening of the overall weight, and a complete refresh of the U-1 HomeStreet color scheme. The boat has left the Madison shop and headed to the Northwest for engine dyno work, Columbia River testing session, and HomeStreet Bank branch display duties. In the photo below, the U-1 was spotted in Charles City, Iowa, on the road to the Northwest.



Jack Miller



Miss Madison Racing



Miss Madison Racing

U-3 Go3 Racing

Ed Cooper's Go3 team has been busy rebuilding key spare parts after some damage last year. Repairs to the front canard and additional back-up parts are being completed, along with the routine Allison engine maintenance. That's Ed Cooper below, laying up new parts.



Go3 Racing



Go3 Racing



Go3 Racing

U-11 Unlimited Racing Group

Work continues on repairs to the original URG hull (#9302) to get it ready for the 2017 racing season. New decks were installed and old damaged parts were replaced or upgraded. This will be the Raney's primary race hull this coming season.



Unlimited Racing Group



Scott Raney



Scott Raney

U-21 Go Fast Turn Left Racing

The Go Fast Turn Left crew put in a big work weekend going through the hull and equipment getting prepared for 2017 and the testing session coming up in Tri-Cities.



Go Fast, Turn Left Racing



Go Fast, Turn Left Racing



Brian Perkins

440 Bucket List Racing (formerly the U-18)

Kelly Stocklin debuted a new race team number, new color, and profile to the Bucket List hull the first weekend of May. The boat made its first appearance participating in the opening day of yachting season parade of boats in Seattle.



Melissa Fey



Bucket List Racing



Bucket List Racing



Bucket List Racing

Porter Racing

As was reported at the end of April, Ted Porter has sold the U-5 (T-6) hull and equipment to Rob Graham (see details noted under the U-12 team). No official word has come from Porter Racing related to the sale or regarding future plans, the status of the U-7 hull and remaining equipment, or about other hulls that Ted Porter currently still owns.

U-12 Graham Trucking Racing

Formal announcement came from Rob Graham confirming some of the information and clarifying what had been talked about during the off-season. He has acquired the former U-5 (T-6 hull #0001), trailer, hauler, engines, and equipment to compete in the 2017 season. The team has retained the services of J. Michael Kelly as its driver as well as the majority of the crew, most of whom already lived in the Northwest. The crew will be led by Tom Anderson. The team race shop is located in Milton, Washington, which just south of Seattle and where the hull has been undergoing an extensive rebuild during the winter. Team Graham Trucking is formally known as U12 Racing LLC. The number 12 is derived from the sum of five and seven, so it pays homage to the history of the hull, which has carried both the U-5 and U-7 numbers over the years. Go to the team's website at <http://grahamtruckingracing.com/>

NEXT MEETING OF UNLIMITEDS UNANIMOUS

Sunday, June 11, 2017
Meeting starts at 2 p.m.

Des Moines Public Library
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