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UNLIMITED NEWSJOURNAL

A Chronicle of Speed

The complicated business of funding a race and the boats.

by Andy Muntz

The officials of the Madison Regatta announced recently the signing of Midwest Tube Mills, Inc., as the title sponsor for the 2018 Indiana Governor's Cup Regatta, which has been scheduled for July 6 to 8 in Madison, Indiana. The signing comes as a welcome relief to a racing organization that has seen its share of financial woes recently. It's been a saga that serves as an excellent example of the issues that continue to plague the sport of unlimited hydroplane racing in general.

The Madison Regatta has operated under a severe financial deficit in recent years because a number of their races became the victim of weather calamities. The race was canceled in 2013 and modified to an exhibition race in 2015 because the Ohio River was flooded. In both cases, the race organizers had to pay the cost of docks, cranes, and other necessities, but received very little revenue



The waterlogged pit area in Madison, Indiana, when the race had to be modified because of a flooded Ohio River in 2015.

Lon Erickson

from ticket sales. As a result, the organization was carrying a debt of about \$60,000 at this time a year ago.

In an effort to climb out of that financial hole, the Madison Regatta officials decided that they would cut their expenses by reducing the amount of money they would pay to the race teams that entered their boats in their 2017 event. In doing so, they touched upon an issue that sits

at the core of the entire economic structure of the sport.

Campaigning an unlimited hydroplane is an expensive hobby. The owner of a race team is continually called upon to shell out great sums of money to keep the race team operational. An article written more than 10 years ago pointed out that an unlimited hull costs about \$200,000, a Lycoming T-55 turbine engine costs about \$80,000, and the running gear adds another

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\$100,000 to the tab. Propellers are about \$10,000 each, the trailer is another \$50,000, and the place where you store the boat will probably cost \$3,000 a month. And, the prices have certainly done nothing but go up since then.

Then there's the cost of going to a race. Depending on how far away the race is from the shop and how far the boat has to be hauled, the cost of entering each race can be in the neighborhood of \$20,000 to \$30,000. That's counting diesel fuel for the truck, food and lodging for the crew, and a host of other expenses.

In the typical model, a significant share of those costs are picked up by the sponsor, who pays the owner an amount of money for the right to have the company name painted on the boat. (Painting the boat also costs money, by the way.) The sponsor usually sees this as an advertising expense. In exchange for the money it pays to the owner, it wants the company name to be placed in front of as many people as possible: fans who will see the boat on the racecourse, readers who will see the name in newspaper stories, viewers who will see it on television, listeners who will hear the name in radio broadcasts, and people who will wander by when the boat is put on display at shopping centers.

Another source of revenue for owners, especially for those that don't have a generous sponsor or can't find a company that sees the value of advertising on a race boat, is the money they receive for showing up at a race. That's why there's a clause in the H1 rulebook about prize money.

According to that rule, 75 percent of the total prize package is to be divided equally among the boats that enter all of the scheduled races during the season (called national boats), minus the

prize money that is paid to the boats that don't enter all of the races. Last year, the national boats earned a range of about \$12,000 in tow money to \$18,000 at each event, depending on the race site. The other boats earned \$2,500 if they made one appearance, \$5,000 each if they made two appearances, and \$7,500 each if they made three appearances.

In preparing for the 2017 event, the Madison Regatta officials struggled to pay the full H1 Unlimited fee to host an unlimited hydroplane event and decided that they would instead pay \$12,000 each to only four entries. With that small field, the typical race format was modified to a series of two-boat match races in the preliminary heats. What's more, because only four boats were allowed to compete, the points that are used to determine the national standings at the end of the season could not be awarded.

While the change did reduce the organization's debt to \$41,000, Regatta President Dan Cole admitted in an interview in the *Madison Courier* newspaper in September that the new format had been a mistake. "If I had it to do all over again I'd go for a points race," he told sportswriter David Campbell. "It was my idea and the board backed me 100 percent, but it was a mistake and that's on me. Next year I want a points race."

In December, the Madison Regatta announced a new pricing structure for the 2018 event that is expected to generate more ticket revenue. Cole said the regatta is also suggesting a race format where there would be no activity on the racecourse on Friday.

The Madison officials also presented two proposals to H1 Unlimited for the 2018 event in which they would pay a total \$100,000 in prize money if H1

would guarantee that at least eight boats would appear. Now, that may seem like a lot of money until you realize that \$100,000 is barely enough to cover the cost of tow money for eight boats and would leave very little for the other expenses that H1 has when holding a race. And, what's more, it's not as if H1 is flush with money in the bank, either.

We are not privy to the reaction that H1 had for that proposal, but UNJ sources report that Madison increased its offer to \$110,000, plus stipulated that they would make a \$10,000 payment toward their debt to H1. Earlier this month, Cole told the *Madison Courier* that the Regatta hoped to have an agreement in place in time for the regatta board's meeting on January 31.

Cole said the proposal asks for at least eight boats to ensure that they have a points race and it also includes a performance clause. He also pointed out that if H1 rejects the offer, they are prepared to move ahead with a program that does not include unlimited hydroplanes.

Meanwhile, the \$50,000 title sponsorship by Midwest Tube Mills comes as welcome news to the cash-strapped regatta committee. The company, which has become an industry leader in the manufacture and sales of steel-rolled tubing for the fence industry, has been in business in Madison, Indiana, for the past 25 years.

"My family and I are thankful for everything that Madison has provided and this is our way of saying thank you," said Rick Russell, president and CEO of Midwest Tube Mills. "I cannot think of a better way to celebrate our 25th year than partnering with the Madison Regatta and the Madison community to be the title sponsor for such a great event." ❖

Unlimited Racing Group announces sponsors.

The U-11 hydroplane will carry the name *Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D's* next season as the result of new agreements that were signed by the team recently. The boat is owned by Scott and Shannon Raney and operates out of Edmonds, Washington.

In December, the race team announced that it has come to an agreement with Reliable Diamond Tool, Inc., of Phoenix to be its presenting sponsor for the season. The company helped sponsor the boat at the San Diego event this past season and found the relationship to be beneficial.

"We are delighted to partner with the U-11 team and driver Tom Thompson," said Jonathan Johnson, CEO of the company. "After a successful introduction to the U-11



Chris Denslow

The U-11 *Reliable Diamond Tool presents J&D's* racing on Mission Bay in San Diego this past year.

team at the 2017 San Diego Bayfair race, we decided that this was a great fit for our company. We look forward to sharing and expanding our Reliable Diamond Tool brand with hydroplane race fans around the world."

Reliable Diamond Tool offers equipment for sawing, drilling, grinding, and polishing a wide variety of materials used in concrete construction, including stone and terrazzo. Its brand will be displayed on the rear uprights and engine cowling of the chartreuse- and red-colored U-11 hydroplane through the 2018 season.

A month later, the team announced that it has come to an agreement with J&D Hydraulics of Auburn, Washington, to once again be its title sponsor for the season. The company is a full-service automotive fabrication and machine shop and was instrumental in the design and fabrication of many parts used in the complete rebuilds of the two U-11 boats.

"J&D Hydraulics has been a valued legacy partner since we formed the U-11 Unlimited Racing Group in 2011," said Shannon Raney. "This family-owned business has been developing, fabricating, and installing very high-quality parts for years and we are ecstatic to represent them in this great sport." ❖

Ellstrom and Oberto announce an agreement, but in another sport.

Ellstrom Racing and Oberto Brands, a long-time sponsor of unlimited hydroplanes who teamed with Ellstrom last year to sponsor the U-16 *Oh Boy! Oberto* at the Seattle race, have announced a sponsorship agreement to return the familiar red, green, and white paint job to the Turbo UTV class of the Best in The Desert off-road racing series in 2018.

The Oberto car is driven by 19-year-old Sven Ellstrom, who made his debut in off-road racing in 2016 and moved up to the competitive Turbo UTV class last season.

Ellstrom and his co-drivers scored podium finishes at the Mint 400 race and the prestigious Las Vegas to Reno race in August. It



then all came together at the Silver State 150 in Caliente, California, in September when Ellstrom scored an impressive first-place finish.

"We are so excited to partner with Ellstrom Racing for another year of off-road UTV racing," said Tom Hernquist, president and CEO of Oberto Brands. Erick Ellstrom, owner of the Ellstrom Racing, added that they are grateful to everyone at Oberto for the support they provide to their team. ❖

Sport mourns the death of Keith Jackson.

Keith Jackson was known for broadcasting many historic sporting events during his long career, but unlimited hydroplane fans also remember him for his work in calling hydro action, both on local TV in Seattle and on ABC's *Wide World of Sports*. Jackson passed away on January 12 in Los Angeles at the age of 89.

A 1954 graduate of Washington State University, Jackson immediately got a job in the sports department at KOMO TV in Seattle where, amongst his other duties, he would call the racing action on Lake Washington each summer.

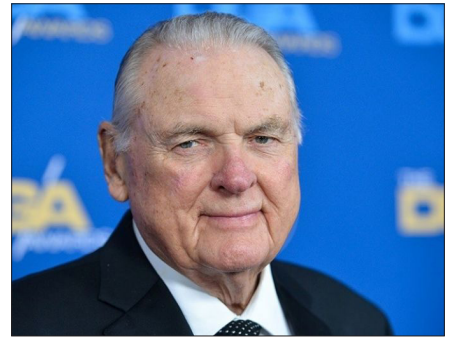
He got a job with ABC News Radio in 1964 then, two years later, joined ABC Sports, where he would become a legend.

He covered both the summer and winter Olympic Games, was the first play-by-play announcer for Monday Night Football, broadcasted many World Series baseball games, the Indianapolis 500, and the Daytona 500.

He was best known, however, as the voice of college football

where he was typically assigned ABC's national game of the week. Among his many awards and honors, he was inducted into the Rose Bowl Hall of Fame.

As an announcer for ABC's *Wide World of Sports*, Jackson was usually there to announce the action when the show included the running of a hydroplane race. ❖



Keith Jackson

Fox News

Richie Sutphen passes away.

The powerboat industry lost an icon in December with the passing of Richard "Richie" Sutphen, the founder of Surtphen World Champion Powerboats. He died in Cape Coral, Florida, following a battle with liver disease. He was 76 years old.

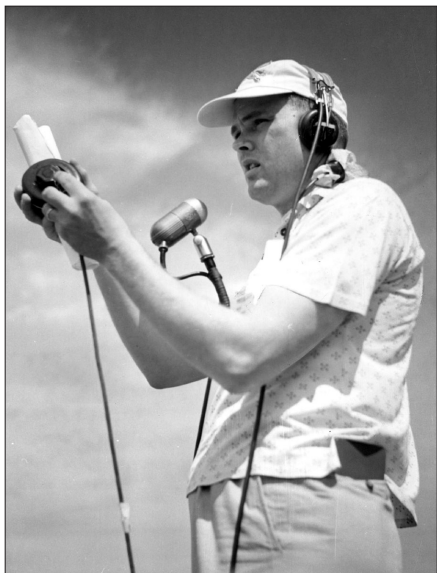
Sutphen was best known for his efforts in offshore racing, where he earned many national and world racing titles. He also was well-known as the driver of a 7-liter Lauterbach inboard hydroplane named *Miss Gangway*.

He joined the unlimited ranks briefly in 1987 when he purchased



The Sutphen Spirit

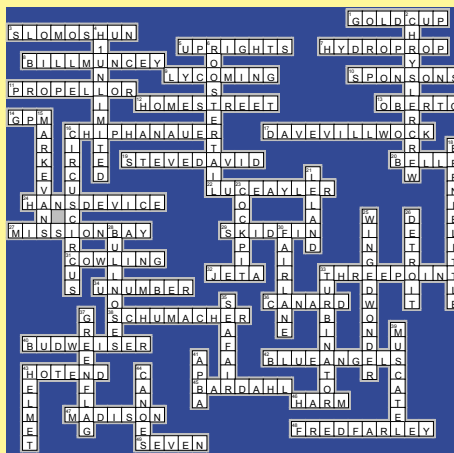
the hull that was previously the turbine-powered *Pay 'n Pak*. The boat saw action that year as the U-66 *Sutphen* and in 1988 as the U-66 *Sutphen Spirit*. Mike Hanson was his driver both years. ❖



Keith Jackson calling the action on Lake Washington in 1958

Seattle Times

Answers to last month's Hydroplane Conundrums.



Our mystery boat last month was the original G-5 *Notre Dame*, the winner of the 1937 Gold Cup and President's Cup. The boat was built by driver Clell Perry in 1935 and campaigned by Herb Mendelson. Powered by a 12-cylinder Deussen, it was reconfigured in 1936 with the cockpit forward, as the picture shows.

Bill Muncey talks about driving the *Miss Thriftway*, Part 2.

Forty years ago, the greatest driver in the history of the sport told the *Unlimited NewsJournal* about his first years driving a competitive hydroplane.

In last month's issue, we reprinted the first segment of an interview where Bill Muncey talked about driving the Miss Thriftway of 1955 and '56. This month, in an interview that was originally published in the February 1978 issue of the Unlimited NewsJournal, Muncey talks about driving the boat in 1957, his accident when the boat was destroyed that year, and about his infamous accident aboard the second Miss Thriftway in 1958. The interview was conducted by a young Craig Fjarlie in 1977.

UNJ: Going into the '57 season, do you know if there were any major hull changes to the *Miss Thriftway*?

Muncey: No, I really don't remember about that. There may have been some runner changes.

You moved from Detroit to Seattle about this time.

I moved to Seattle that winter and it allowed me to spend more time with the crew in spring testing, which I'd never done before. That was a delight. I learned a lot. I was driving every day. If you're going to do anything well, you have to do that. You have to be willing to pay the price. While everybody else is up skiing and having fun playing golf or tennis and all that jazz, I'm out driving a stupid race boat. But, I was learning and I learned a lot. I really enjoyed the experience. I proceeded many years after that to run all winter with Jack Ramsey and the crew. From a technique point of view, it really paid off.

At what time were the plans for *Thriftway, Too* drawn up?



Bill Muncey accepts the Gold Cup after winning the race in Seattle in 1957.

Oh, I can't tell you that. It was delivered in the summer of '56.

That early?

Oh, yeah. It was delivered in the early summer of '56. They just didn't have a chance to get it together, do the installations on it. You know, that takes a lot of time.

Early in the summer of '57 there was a three-lap exhibition

race on Lake Washington when the Stan Sayres pits was dedicated. Do you recall that?

Oh! That was with Dave Garroway. Yeah! That was a helluva show. We won!

I think Jack Regas was second.

Yeah. I cheated.

Oh, is that right?

Yeah. Oh, I don't know whether

Forde Photographers



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



Bob Carver



[Top] The Miss Thriftway during a run on Lake Washington in 1957. [Middle] The Miss Thriftway and the crew as the boat sits next to a dock at the brand new Stan Sayres pits in Seattle. [Above] Bill Muncey became a Seattle resident before the 1957 season and, between test runs in the Thriftway, he was on the air as a disk jockey on KING Radio.

I cheated or not, but I won anyway. It was supposed to be an “everybody race what they brung” type of thing. We’d all make a race out of it and run close together until the final lap and then we’d go balls out, which is what I did, And we won. It was national exposure for Thriftway.

Just before the Tahoe race, the Miss Thriftway was converted to Rolls power. Why did you switch from the Allison?

Ted Jones was convinced the Rolls is a stronger engine. It winds tighter, pulls a little more horsepower. It’s a quicker engine. From a mechanical point of view, the basement isn’t as strong. The crank and bearing surfaces in an Allison are better than the Rolls. But, it’s a single-stage blower and the Rolls is a two-stage.

When you switched to the Rolls engines, do you recall who you got them from?

It seems to me they got some from Fageol, but I’m not sure. I think the original engines that ran came from Lou Fageol.

Do you recall much about the ’57 Tahoe race? Slovak won.

I’ll tell you, sometimes you remember things by other incidents and not the racing itself.

They had a lot of timing errors that year.

Lots of timing errors. Lots of officiating errors. But, there was a lot of publicity still being given to the Gold Cup incident in 1956 where they said I hit a buoy. And, at the same time, Horace Dodge instituted an injunction against the race. The whole thing was sort of all encompassing and sort of followed me. In that particular race at Lake Tahoe in 1957, I know that all of a sudden the word got out to the pits that Muncey had hit a buoy. Lap after lap, Muncey was disqualified. Muncey hit another buoy. It kept on going. Muncey hit another



[Top] The first *Miss Thriftway* was destroyed in an accident during the 1957 Governor's Cup race in Madison, Indiana.

[Above] The mangled boat after it was retrieved from the Ohio River.

one. And, I wasn't in the heat. I was sitting on shore!

The Gold Cup was next. Did you have a special package for it?

Not particularly, no. We were still experimenting.

Do you recall anything special about that race?

I don't recall every heat of that Gold Cup. All I know is we won and I don't think there was any question about it. That was the first Gold Cup I'd ever been in without being involved in some kind of an incident, one way or another.

Late in the '57 season, *Hawaii Ka'i III* really came on strong. They seemed to dominate.

Well, I think he was running pretty good. I think that probably, in the Gold Cup that year, they were having some kind of difficulty.

Later in the season, how would you compare your boat to the *Ka'i*?

The only thing I remember is, by the time got to Madison, he wasn't running anywhere near as fast as I was. We were really running good. We set a world record there and it stood for years and years and years. I never got a chance to run against the *Ka'i*, and boy, sure wanted to, 'cause we were running like a bandit. The *Ka'i* was winning and we were breaking down. I think we were faster than

the *Ka'i* by far in the President's Cup that year, but we busted the boat up.

Do you know what caused the crash in Madison?

Maybe it was getting tired. Maybe it had been subjected to some loads and things. Maybe hydraulic impact. It's hard to tell. It wasn't ignition. There wasn't any fire or explosion like that. The boat just disintegrated.

Some people who saw the accident—Phil Cole was one of them—claim that Jay Murphy was returning to the pits at low speed in *Breathless II* and you hit his wake.

Well, I don't agree with that, I don't really think so. It may have been his wake that set it off, but that's a terrible thing to charge a guy with. That's not fair. If I can't run in that kind of stuff, I have no business being out there. The last guy I should blame is one of my competitors. That's crap. You know, I've been guilty, maybe, of a lot of things, but I've never been guilty—I don't think—of blaming other people for my losing. I will complain to my own organization when I'm not running well, but you'll never see me come in and bitch at somebody else for causing me to lose a race. I feel if they caused me to lose it, I must have put myself there in the first place. I really resent people who do that, and we've got some in our sport. Last year [1976] in particular, we had two or three who just constantly bitched and bitched and bitched because they said I was doing this or somebody else was doing that to them. Hey, if that happens, you're in the wrong place, baby. You're not playing the game as sharp as you should be. You're not paying attention.

Do you have any other recollections about the accident?



The two Thriftway sisters in 1957. That's *Thriftway, Too* on the left.

I don't know much about it. The nice thing about a lot of the accidents I've had is that I've been unconscious. I haven't retained anything about it; hasn't had any effect on my driving. I've come back and had some of my best seasons. I was doing over 170 miles an hour. I was in the hospital a long time. I didn't break a bone, incredibly. I did rupture my kidneys and I did tear my stomach loose from the abdominal wall. I bit my tongue in half and I had a lot of other injuries. I was young and I healed quickly. That's the privilege of youth. So, I was sure I'd be back strong the following year.

You were selected to drive *Thriftway, Too* through the mile traps late in the year. Why did you drive the boat?

I don't even remember why. We had other drivers around, guys who wanted to drive that boat. I wasn't eager to drive it.

What kind of preparation did the team make for the mile record attempt?

None, not really. Not like they did I finally broke the record. They did a little bit of work, and they got special propellers for it and special gears, I suppose, but they didn't really put everything into it. My God, I think we spent six or eight weeks to prepare for it in 1960.

Did you do much to prepare yourself?

Not really. Took it out and decided if it could go fast, and it could. We didn't know how fast it would go. I think they had some problems and I don't think I went through very fast at all.

You said you didn't really like the boat. What was it that you didn't like?

Well, basically, it wasn't competitive. It was underpowered. It was designed for two Rolls and it only had one in it. It was too big. It was a ball to drive in the straight-aways because it was like a big Cadillac. But it really wasn't all that competitive, I didn't think. And I really didn't think, underpowered

as it was, that it taxed your ability too much.

Did the boat scare you, sitting up front like that?

Naw...I've never been truly afraid like that, as I define the word. The boat was so big I didn't think anybody could get in any trouble and nobody ever did. A lot of guys who were considerably less experienced than Brien Wygle or myself drove the boat, and they never had any problem.

I never really drove the boat that much. I did a little test running for them now and then. I liked to see them get their own driver in it. I don't know, I didn't really enjoy it. I stayed away from it. There was a lot of competition between teams then, too. We were with the same organization, but there was a lot of competition we felt strongly about.

Perhaps it's not even fair to ask, but how does the *Thriftway, Too* compare with the new cabover *Atlas*?

Oh, my God! It isn't even relative. I've forgotten, I think that boat was 34 feet long, and this one is about 28-6. I think the *Too* weighed about 7,000 pounds, maybe even more. I can tell you, this one is considerably lighter on its feet. This is a delicate mecha-



The new *Miss Thriftway* made its debut at the 1958 Apple Cup in Chelan, Washington.

nism, and you've got to stay on top of it every moment.

The second *Miss Thriftway* was built for the 1958 season. How did it compare with the first boat?

Well, it was longer for one thing, but it was a helluva lot heavier. Something happened during the construction. I think it was one of the first times anybody did a lot of work with fiberglass. It was a fiberglass-covered boat and it came up a lot heavier than Ted Jones expected it to. He wasn't happy with it.

Do you know what it weighed?

No, I don't. I know he was very unhappy with the weight. It was built by a firm in Bellingham, Washington. They build cruisers now. Anyway, Ted designed it and supervised the construction up there. They did a nice job, but it came out way too heavy, that's all. The guy made it extra, extra glassy, and it came out about 500 pounds more than it was supposed to.

Did you change your driving technique at all when you started running the second boat?

Well, I thought that was an excellent boat. I thought it was a little heavy, but it was fun to drive. It cornered well and accelerated well. It seemed to be reasonably light its feet, which was unusual because of its weight. I enjoyed driving it and I felt it was going to be going to be a barnburner. I really did.

The boat won its second race. The Detroit Memorial.

That's unusual to do with a new boat. There was a good strong field there. We knew then that the boat was going to be good and quick.

During qualifying for the '58 Gold Cup, you caught a cold.

It got there for about three or four years where I would seem to catch cold every time the race was in Seattle. It was just like clock-work.

You had a fairly easy draw for



Bill Muncey in the cockpit of the second *Miss Thriftway* as he is about to cruise onto Lake Washington in Seattle in 1958.

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

the first heat. You went against *Coral Reef*, *Gale V*, *Miss Spokane*, and *Miss Superstest II*.

Well, *Coral Reef* took second in the race, so I'd say that was pretty good. But I don't think any of those boats were running anywhere near as well as ours.

When you were coming to the line for the start of the second heat, just before the accident happened, did you have sensation that something was wrong?

None

You just set up for the turn and it wouldn't go?

Wouldn't turn, yeah.

Do you recall anything of the instant when you went straight instead of left?

Well, I was just worried. I had a helluva good start and I jumped out front. Naturally, I was worried because everybody was coming up and getting set to turn left. I wasn't going left. I was going straight. So, I waved to everybody, hoping they'd back off to let me go by, and they did.

Earlier in the week, *Thriftway, Too* lost a rudder and spun out. Were rudders a problem for you that week, or was it just coincidence?

I don't know. It seemed to be a strange thing that was happening

to the whole team that week. I don't know that prior to that very many rudders had been lost under those circumstances, nor after that were there that many rudders lost. It was incredible that it could have happened to us.

We did die check and magnaflux everything, particularly between heats, so the chances of me losing one should've been really minimal, because I lost mine in competition. The inspection between heats is very severe. On the other hand, Brien lost his, and I don't know that there's any explanation for it. Just a strange thing that happened to us.

Let's theorize for a moment. Suppose the accident with the Coast Guard cutter had never happened, do you think the second *Miss Thriftway* could have achieved the things the third boat did?

Yeah. The boats have nothing to do with it. It was the people. That was when Jack Ramsey became a permanent part of the *Thriftway* organization. That's when things changed. I think it would've happened with any boat. Although, that third *Miss Thriftway* was an excellent boat. But, I think if Ramsey and that crew had been on the *Queen Mary*, they'd have been able to get it qualified.



In one of the most spectacular accidents in hydroplane history, the *Miss Thriftway* lost its steering during the 1958 Gold Cup in Seattle and plowed into the side of a Coast Guard patrol boat. You can see Bill Muncey in the water at the top of the frame and just a little right of center.

Did Willard Rhodes ever go for a ride in the *Miss Thriftway*?

Yeah, I took him.

Who do you think were some of the top drivers in the mid-50s? We talked earlier about Danny Foster.

Danny was excellent.

Did he have a particular area of the course where he was especially tough, or was he just tough all the way around?

Danny had a little problem getting to the starting line on time. But, boy, he sure handled a boat I thought. Hey, the record speaks for itself. He did a lot of winning. I don't care if you run against one boat or 50. If you win, you've had to pay relatively the same price. It has nothing to do with the competition. Anybody who can win that often is a winner. Danny was an excellent driver. I always thought Donnie Wilson was excellent. Ron Musson didn't come in at that time, did he? He came in around '59. Ron,

of course, was excellent. He was just superb.

How about Mira Slovak?

Oh, damn good chauffeur.

Excellent. And that boat ran good. It was running awful strong. It depends how you measure success. Do you measure a race driver by his record? Is that important? Is it his ability to drive a boat? Or, his ability to keep equipment alive? Or, his ability to make good starts, or good corners, or his ability to sprint well? That sort of thing. Or, his ability to represent his sponsor well?

The average spectator probably thinks in terms of race victories, which is really rather incomplete.

I think it is. I've tried to be more than that. The record will have to wait and see, when I've given up, whether I've done it or not. I wanted to be more than just a race driver. I'm a marketing man by education. Racing has been an appendage to these marketing interests, and I've done well at it,

from a marketing point of view. I'm sure there are some other excellent drivers in the history of our sport who maybe didn't have a chance to be in it as long as I have, so naturally they didn't win as much. Maybe they'd have won a helluva lot more if they'd had a chance to be around. But I wanted more out of life than just being a race driver. That doesn't sound very imaginative.

In those days, when you came back home at the airport, crowds were frequently there to greet you with banners and all sorts of things. How did you feel about that?

Oh, in Seattle it was sensational. We even had 5 or 10,000 people there to greet us when we lost, particularly with regard to that '56 Gold Cup race in Detroit when they said I hit a buoy. On the other hand, you gotta remember, I wasn't living here then. I lived in Detroit. But I did have a chance to come out a couple times when they greeted us at the airport. It was kinda nice. It was really fun. It was a little sticky at times, you know, being a Detroit resident, with the feelings as strong as they were.

There wasn't an air of reasonableness about it. It was an unreasonable, emotional thing on the part of the community because they felt very strongly about their boats. Unlimited racing was the first activity that gave Seattle any national exposure. They never had any sporting event of any consequence, other than maybe, at one time or another, a Rose Bowl-winning football team. So, other than that, this was the first sport that gave them all that national attention. It didn't necessarily make any sense, but why does it have to make any sense as long as it makes fun? And I think that's what it did. It made a lot of fun. ❖

Owner's loyalty or driver's longevity?

by Jim Sharkey

A few years ago, after learning that Greg Hopp was departing the Leland team, I started thinking and trying to remember all the drivers who have stuck it out with one owner for years. I couldn't remember how long Hopp had been with Leland, but it seemed like forever. The only driver that came to mind who may have driven longer for one owner was Ken Muscatel. So, I decided to do some digging, and I was surprised with what I found.

The criteria I choose was that a driver would have to drive for an owner a minimum of four years, regardless of the number of races he had driven. Some teams ran a limited schedule, like only in their hometown. If I excluded the drivers who didn't have a great deal of races under their belts, I would be excluding owners such as Stan Sayres and his drivers: Lou Fageol (six years and ten races) and Joe Taggart (four years and seven races). Sayres didn't attend that many races, but look at his accomplishment and the innovation that he brought to this sport. What I am trying to do is show the loyalty that some drivers have to their owner and their team.

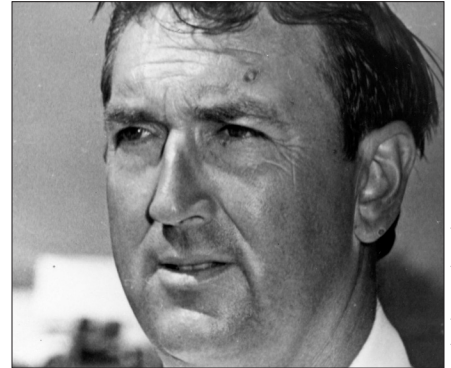
I thought Ken Muscatel must hold the record for driving for the same owner. Boy, was I wrong. Muscatel drove for himself for 16 years. Bob Gilliam drove for himself for 20 years. Mitch Evans drove 16 years for Ed Cooper, and Wild Bill Cantrell drove 15 years for Joe Schoenith. Greg Hopp was affiliated

with Fred Leland's organization for only 13 years. (He also leased a Leland boat in 1999 and ran 10 races.) Steve David drove for the Miss Madison team for 13 years, plus he had nine years with Jim Harvey.

Bill Muncey raced for four or more years with four different owners: Willard Rhodes, Joe Schoenith, George Simon, and for himself. There were four other drivers who raced for more than four years with three different owners. Jack Schafer Jr. drove for Chuck Hickling, Brian Keogh, and Bob Patterson; Chuck Thompson raced for Walter Dossin, Bill Harrah, and himself; Nate Brown raced for the Ellstrom's, Bill Wurster, and himself; and Chip Hanauer raced for Bernie Little, Fran Muncey, and Bob Steil.

I found 14 drivers who drove for four years with two owners: Fred Alter, Steve David, Tom D'Eath, Lou Fageol, Danny Foster, Mike Hanson, Walt Kade, Jimmy King, Bob Miller, Scott Pierce, Jimmy Shane, Joe Taggart, Mark Tate, and Dave Villwock.

Looking at the owners and the drivers that were affiliated with them, I found that Joe Schoenith had seven different drivers who drove for more than four years: Alter, Muncey, Foster, Duby, Cantrell, and both Jerry and Lee Schoenith. The Madison team had six drivers who drove for four or more years: David, Hanson, Irvin, McCormick, Shane, and Snyder. There were two other teams, Fred Leland and George Simon, who had five different drivers who drove for



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Bob Gilliam drove 20 years for the same owner: himself.

four or more years. Two teams, Bill Wurster and Bernie Little, had four drivers with four or more years driving for them.

I have sat and looked at this data several different ways. Some drivers change teams continually, while others like to stay in one place. Several of the drivers worked with one owner, left and came back. I did not count this against them, I just added up the total years spent driving for each owner. Sometimes they only raced one race a year, others went the entire circuit.

Is it fair to compare someone who went the entire circuit with someone who just did regional races? Probably not, but they were there to fill out the field and put on a good show for the fans on the beach. If someone such as Mitch Evans, Mark Weber, or Mark Tate decided to make a comeback, how many people would be thrilled to watch them race again? I know I would.

You have to love this sport and we should be grateful for the owners, drivers, and the crews who work so hard to put on the show for us. ❖

Owner	Driver	Years Raced	Races Run
GILLIAM, BOB	GILLIAM, BOB	20	80
COOPER, ED	EVANS, MITCH	16	112
MUSCATEL, KEN	MUSCATEL, KEN	16	107
SCHOENITH, JOE	CANTRELL, BILL	15	83
LELAND, FRED	HOPP, GREG	13	69
MISS MADISON INC.	DAVID, STEVE	13	81
MISS MADISON INC.	HANSON, MIKE	11	77
GO FAST TURN LEFT RACING	PERKINS, BRIAN	10	41
COOPER, ED	KING, JIMMY	9	40
HARVEY, JIM	DAVID, STEVE	9	81
PATTERSON, BOB	ARMSTRONG, RON	9	26
RHODES, WILLARD	MUNCEY, BILL	9	49
SIMON, GEORGE	WILSON, DON	9	37
THOMPSON, CHUCK	THOMPSON, CHUCK	9	34
WOLFBAUER, MIKE	MILLER, BOB	9	22
ELLSTROM, ERICK	VILLWOCK, DAVE	8	37
KAISER, HENRY	COLLINS, MAX	8	9
LITTLE, BERINE	CHENOWETH, DEAN	8	57
LITTLE, BERINE	KROPFELD, JIM	8	56
LITTLE, BERINE	VILLWOCK, DAVE	8	59
SCHOENITH, JOE	SCHOENITH, LEE	8	44
BROWN, NATE	BROWN, KIP	7	30
DAVIS, GEORGE	DAVIS, GEORGE	7	8
DOLLAR, STAN	DOLLAR, STAN	7	18
LELAND, FRED	BARRIE, JACK	7	21
LOMBARDO, GUY	LOMBARDO, GUY	7	38
MILLER, BOB	MILLER, BOB	7	26
MISS MADISON INC.	SNYDER, RON	7	59
MUNCEY, FRAN	HANAUER, CHIP	7	63
MURPHY, PHIL	MURPHY, ROGER	7	11
PORTER, TED	BERNARD, JEFF	7	37
THORESON, AL	HOPP, JERRY	7	64
WEBSTER, STEVE	WEBSTER, MIKE	7	36
WOOMER, STEVE	TATE, MARK	7	66
BARDAHL, OLE	MUSSON, RON	6	34
DOSSIN, WALTER	THOMPSON, CHUCK	6	28
E-LAM, OLIVER	ELAM, OLIVER	6	10
ELLSTROM, ERICK	BROWN, NATE	6	18
JONES, MIKE	HANSON, MIKE	6	37
KLEIN, CHARLES	KLEIN, CHARLES	6	6
LITTLE, BERINE	HANAUER, CHIP	6	37
MISS MADISON INC.	IRVIN, MILNER	6	34
MUNCEY, BILL	MUNCEY, BILL	6	52
MURPHY, PHIL	MURPHY, JAY	6	25
PORTER, TED	SHANE, JIMMY	6	21
RANEY, SCOTT	THOMPSON, TOM	6	32
SAYRES, STAN	FAGEOL, LOU	6	11
SCHOENITH, JOE	DUBY, ROY	6	13
SCHOENITH, JOE	MUNCEY, BILL	6	54
THOMPSON, GORDON	BRADEN, BILL	6	13
WURSTER, BILL	BROWN, NATE	6	29
WURSTER, BILL	PIERCE, SCOTT	6	48
BOGIE, BOB	BOGIE, BOB	5	13
HARVEY, JIM	TATE, MARK	5	30

Owner	Driver	Years Raced	Races Run
HICKLING, CHUCK	SCHAFFER JR., JACK	5	12
JONES, MIKE	JONES, MIKE	5	23
LELAND, FRED	EVANS, MARK	5	38
MUCUTZA, LEO	MUCUTZA, LEO	5	8
PORTER, TED	KELLY, J. MICHAEL	5	28
SAILE, FRANK	SAILE, FRANK	5	31
SCHAFFER, JACK	ALTER, FRED	5	22
SCHAFFER, JACK	KADE, WALT	5	11
SCHOENITH, JOE	SCHOENITH, JERRY	5	26
SCHOENITH, JOE	ALTER, FRED	5	21
SCHOENITH, JOE	FOSTER, DANNY	5	11
SEDAM, JIM	YARLING, TODD	5	46
SIMON, GEORGE	MUNCEY, BILL	5	28
THOMPSON, JIM	HAYWARD, BOB	5	18
VAN BLERCK, JOE	VAN BLERCK, JOE	5	22
VISEL, MORLAN	VISEL, MORLAN	5	6
WALTHER, GEORGE	WALTHER, DAVE	5	12
WILSON, ERNEST	WILSON, HAROLD	5	9
WOLFBAUER, MIKE	KADE, WALT	5	41
WURSTER, BILL	KING, JIMMY	5	23
BOEING, BILL	SLOVAK, MIRA	4	17
BROWN, NATE	BROWN, NATE	4	9
DODGE, HORACE	DODGE, HORACE	4	8
EACRETT, MIKE	EACRETT, MIKE	4	8
FAGEOL, LOU	FAGEOL, LOU	4	19
FALLON, AL	FALLON, AL	4	8
FALLON, AL	FOSTER, DANNY	4	9
GREGORY, KIM	WEBER, MARK	4	27
HARRAH, BILL	THOMPSON, CHUCK	4	27
HERRINGTON, JIM	GARDNER, WARNER	4	36
HICKLING, CHUCK	MASCHMEDT, BOB	4	10
JONES, MIKE & LORI	ZIMMERMAN, JON	4	21
KAISER, EDGAR	REGAS, JACK	4	15
KAUFMAN, TOM	KAUFMAN, TOM	4	27
KEOGH, BRIAN	SCHAFFER JR., JACK	4	10
LaROCK, PETE	MARTIN, TOM	4	17
LELAND, FRED	PIERCE, SCOTT	4	15
LELAND, FRED	TROXELL, TERRY	4	16
MISS MADISON INC.	McCORMICK, JIM	4	27
MISS MADISON INC.	SHANE, JIMMY	4	22
PATTERSON, BOB	SCHAFFER JR., JACK	4	10
SAYRES, STAN	TAGGART, JOE	4	7
SCHUMACHER, BILLY	THEORET, JEAN	4	23
SIMON, GEORGE	D'EATH, TOM	4	30
SIMON, GEORGE	SIMON, GEORGE	4	9
STEIL, BOB	D'EATH, TOM	4	17
STEIL, BOB	HANAUER, CHIP	4	25
STOEN, MILO	BROW, BILL	4	16
STOEN, MILO	SARTZ, DALLAS	4	9
TAGGART, JOE	TAGGART, JOE	4	8
WAGGONER, BILL	STEAD, BILL	4	28
WOECK, PETER	HICKLING, CHUCK	4	12
WOOMER, STEVE	REYNOLDS, STEVE	4	33
WURSTER, BILL	WOODS JR., GEORGE	4	33

A message from the chairman.

Acting H1 Unlimited chairman Charlie Grooms brings us up to speed with what's going on.

by Charlie Grooms

While the “off-season” is far too long, it does allow for quality time to prepare for the frantic three months of the summer season. And, while the pace is not like June, July or August, much is being done to advance the sport we all find near and dear.

Owners have had numerous planning and scheduling meetings and have agreed to a 2018 race schedule. Boat count, which has been a source of much dialog, is forming nicely and, as of this writing, we have a minimum of eight confirmed boats intending to attend all events

H1 has had multiple constructive meetings with race site partners and we believe this consistent dialog will produce a result more in keeping with all our desires. All sites view this effort a positive for all, most certainly the fan, and we are happy to advance that desire.

I cannot say enough good things or commend Richard Anderson, Adam Cook, Kathy McLemore, and the entire Seattle Seafair committee for their effort in working with us to add value to the Seafair celebration of summer in Seattle. We are all pulling in one direction and that event and the accompanying partnership with the U.S. Navy, as well as Seafair broadcast partner KIRO TV and its sponsors, Albert Lee Appliance,



HomeStreet Bank, Les Schwab Tire, Beacon Plumbing, and others, are making constructive steps forward. Live TV and Seafair have been a real part of Seattle summers and we all want that to continue.

H1 officials have submitted their wish list and budget items for review and approval, and that includes the purchase of a brand NEW starting clock for the 2018 season

Ticket sales for the Championship Gala are brisk and we are close to a SELLOUT for the event in the Tri-Cities. The Water Follies are an exceptional partner and their unending efforts to support H1 and unlimited hydroplane racing will be on full display on February 10, 2018. That event will certainly be fun and it's the intention of H1 to thank a multitude of partners for their efforts in 2017, as well as the past and into 2018

The construction of two brand new boats that will debut at the spring training session in the Tri-Cities on June 1, 2018, is special and the Go Fast Turn Left Racing Team and the HomeStreet Bank teams need to be commended for their efforts. These new boats built and campaigned by experienced teams will make 2018 new and different and certainly showcase the commitment they have to our sport.

We continue to make significant strides in our effort to open what were once restricted areas to better connect with the fan. While more action on the water is important, we believe a better connection on a one-on-one basis with the fans and our participants is an achievable goal and within the confines of our insurance guidelines. You will see more access in 2018.

Finally, the notes that I took at the open forum we had in the HomeStreet Race shop last fall have served me well for agenda items that need priority as we reshape H1. That was certainly a wonderful cross section of interested parties and we are having success with those action items.

We expect several of those action items to be addressed as part of announcements at the Tri-Cities banquet.

Our quest for a chairman has progressed and I am most certainly planning on getting it done RIGHT as opposed to getting it done. ❖

HydroFile

Race Team News



Lon Erickson

U-1 HomeStreet Racing

The progress on the new HomeStreet racing hull continues at the HSR shop in Tukwila, seen here are photos of the construction, including close-ups of the cockpit as it gets completed and installed in the new hull. From team information, the major hull construction is to wrap up near the end of January and the hull is expected to go to the Madison race shop for the installation of hardware and systems and then completion. The team is currently in the process of duplicating parts and hardware to make components interchangeable with the new hull and the existing, older race boat. The plan is to have both boats ready for the start of the 2018 season, with the new boat their primary race boat. Crew chief Dan Hoover is hopeful they might be able to test both boats at the June spring testing session in the Tri-Cities.



HomeStreet Racing photos

U-11 Unlimited Racing Group

After last month's news of Reliable Diamond Tool returning to the U-11 as presenting sponsor in 2018, the Raney-led team announced J&D's Hydraulics will be the title sponsor for the entire 2018 season. J&D's has been involved with the U-11 team since its inception in 2011 and continues with title sponsorship this year.



Lon Erickson

U-21 Go Fast Turn Left Racing

With plans to compete on the entire circuit in 2018, the Go Fast, Turn Left team is continuing to seek sponsorship for individual races.

Sponsorships are available for some races of the season - Get On Board with us for 2018!



440 Bucket List Racing

Work continues at *Bucket List Racing*. The hull is getting attention on the running surfaces. The crew is removing and reworking sponson runners, as well as updating and checking repairs from damage during the 2017 season and reinstalling the shaft log.



Bottom of hull running surfaces



Shaft log installed



Doubler repair.



Skid fin bracket repair

Bucket List Racing photos

My \$0.02 Worth

Editorial Comment



Andy
Muntz

A major event happened in the world of sports recently. It was something much larger and longer lasting than which team won the World Series or the Super Bowl, or which country will win the most medals at the Winter Olympics. Yet, the event received very little notice. That, in itself, is part of the story.

The news arrived at about Christmas time from the publishers of *Sports Illustrated*, for 63 years a weekly staple in the world of sports. They announced that henceforth, their publication would be produced only once every other week (except for the annual swimsuit edition).

Sports Illustrated appears to be the latest victim of what has become a growing list of magazines and newspapers that have found it necessary to reinvent themselves in order to survive in the modern sports market. It's indicative of a

changing market that the sport of unlimited hydroplane racing, if not all of motorsports, also is finding difficult to navigate.

The world of sports is changing rapidly. Everybody involved in the enterprise, from sports promoters and sponsors to those who write articles for sports periodicals, is trying to find the best way to reach a market that is increasingly dominated by the Millennials, those who were born in the 1980s and 1990s.

Reaching Millennials is a tricky business, but extremely important to those who might want to make money in sports. They have become a very powerful group, now totaling about a quarter of the population and easily the most lucrative market that now exists.

The market research shows that there are a few important things to know about Millennials.

They want to feel connected, they like to share, they are inspired by people they know in person or online, and they move fast because they can stay connected wherever they might be.

As *Sports Illustrated* has learned, they tend not to read magazines and newspapers. In fact, they tend not to watch any sports on television, either. Instead, they prefer watching programming they have recorded on their DVR or can find streaming on-demand.

According to the research, what they do want is an experience, and that's a hopeful thing for our sport because if a hydroplane race is nothing else, it's an experience. The key is to market it as such and to find a way to get the fan more connected and to have such a unique experience that they will share it with their friends. ❖

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Letters may be edited for clarity and space.

PLEASE JOIN US AT THE NEXT MEETING OF UNLIMITEDS UNANIMOUS.

2 p.m. on Sunday, February 11, 2018

Shoreline Public Library, 345 NE 175th St., Shoreline, Washington 98155