

A conversation with Lee Schoenith, Part 1

Few people had as great an influence on the sport of unlimited hydroplane racing in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s as Lee Schoenith. In the early years, he was a hero to Detroit fans and a villain to those in Seattle. To many, he would later become known as the "Czar." He got involved when his father, Joe Schoenith, the owner of a Detroit electrical contracting company called W.D. Gale, Inc., took the advice of his friend Jack Schafer, bought an Unlimited-class hydroplane, and went racing in 1950. Lee eventually became the boat's driver and would win a total of seven races, including the controversial 1955 Gold Cup in Seattle. He then took a more active role in the operation of his dad's race team, and became the commissioner of the Unlimited Racing Commission, where he led the sport from



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its tradition as a hobby for millionaires to something that was more professional. The following interview was conducted by Craig Fjarlie as the hydro fleet visited Detroit in July 1984 and it was used in the development of a story that he wrote for *Boatracing Magazine* in early 1985. It appears here for the first time in question-and-answer format.

Fjarlie: When and where were you born, educated, etc.?

Schoenith: I was born in Detroit, Michigan, August 16, 1929. I attended school in Detroit—St. Catharine's Grade School, University of Detroit college. Mainly business. Then, I took some night courses in engineering and blueprint reading, and that. Business degree.

Had your dad started the company then?

No, he went to work for Gale in 1921, and then eventually bought the company in 1936.

So, by the time you were in school, it was his company.

Yes

And you had ideas of moving into the same line of business, then?

Well, yes. It was a good business at the time. And then we branched out into other things than just the electrical.

How did the family get involved with boat racing? You bought Warren Avis's *Miss Frostie*.

That's right, but really, right across from where we're sitting right now, is Kean's Marina, which is a big marina on the river. For years, we had big speed boats, pleasure boats. There was a man named Jack Schafer in Detroit, who owned Such Crust bread, and he used to keep all his race boats there. We got to know him, and he just kept telling us that it was a good way to promote your business. So, we bought the old *Miss Frostie* in 1949 and renamed it *Gale* and raced it in 1950 after our company, and then we had a series of boats called *Gale*.

When you bought that boat, after you started running it, it had been rebuilt and lengthened. Did you do that work? Your crew?

Yes, we lengthened it and put an Al-

lison in it.

Did you get any Duesenberg engines with it?

No. There was only one Duesenberg engine, and we didn't want it at the time. I kinda wish now I'd bought it and kept it, but no, we just bought the hull and a trailer, that was all.

Then you got a stock of Allisons, from...?

We just picked up Allisons here and there, and then in 1952 I went to Brookley AFB in Mobile, Alabama, to a government auction and I bought 28 brand-new Allisons, in crates, all wrapped up, for \$125 a piece. I also bought 30,000 pounds of parts for a penny a pound. Many years later, I think we paid as much as \$1,000 for an Allison, and I guess today [1984], a good Allison might be \$3,000 or \$4,000.

The first couple times Gale went to the races, you had some problems. I don't think you qualified the first time.

Well, with the original *Gale* on the Detroit River, we attempted to qualify for the Gold Cup and we broke a jack shaft, which it had in those days in a boat. And then, we tried to qualify for the Memorial and broke something else. We went to Buffalo, New York, and we did qualify there. Then I ran in Washington, D.C., New Martinsville, West Virginia, and I ran in the Silver Cup here in Detroit, in 1950. Then, Dan Arena built us a new boat the winter of '50-'51, which was the *Gale II*, which we started racing in '51.

Now, in '50 at the President's Cup, Bill Muncey rode with you in one heat?

Ah, Bill Muncey rode with me, another fellow I can't even think of his name, and Al D'Eath, Tom D'Eath's father, rode with me. I had three different

Schoenith Family Collection



The Schoenith family. Lee's mother, Millie Schoenith, is on the left, his father, Joe, on the right, and in front of the young Lee in the middle are his twin brothers, Tom and Jerry.



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riding mechanics, because no one would get back in twice.

From your perspective as a driver, was it pretty rough? Did it beat you up pretty badly?

Well, when you're a young kid and having fun, you didn't pay much attention, but it was an awful, awful rough-riding boat.

Say, the day after the race, were you pretty sore?

Yeah. Well, it was a one-step hydroplane, and the cockpit was in back of the transom. It was pretty rough.

Do you remember any of the original crew members, who they were?

I didn't have much, what you'd call crewmembers back then.

Who did most of the maintenance work?

Well, a guy named Lyle Ritchie, who worked out of the Budd Company here, and then there was a man that worked for us in our garage named Noble Faught, then another kid named Jay Lampey, who I went to school with, helped out. And when you were down at Kean's Marina here, there would be two *Such Crusts*, the *Gale*, maybe a couple *My Sweeties*, and who knows, we'd be there all night working, 30 or 40 guys, and everybody helped everybody.

Before you got involved, one ques-



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TOP: The family's first boat, the rough-riding *Gale*, was built in 1940 as *Notre Dame* and also saw action as *Miss Frostie* before Joe Schoenith purchased it in 1950. **MIDDLE:** Joe Schoenith built *Gale II* in 1951. The boat is shown here in the Mt. Baker pits in Seattle. **ABOVE:** Lee Schoenith drives *Gale II* across the starting line behind Bill Cantrell in *Such Crust V* during the 1953 Gold Cup.

tion I wanted to ask, did you ever come down to the races and watch Gar Wood, or any of those people?

I never saw Gar Wood. I never saw a race until after World War II. Then I saw... We used to belong to the Detroit Yacht Club across the river, and we came down and watched all the races then. Of course, in 1948, I think it was, there were six races in Detroit. So, you'd come down any weekend you wanted, practically, and see a boat race.

You must have known some of the participants before you got involved, in addition to Schafer.

Oh, yeah. I knew Cantrell and Danny Foster, and Roy Duby. Everyone lived at Kean's all summer long. So, when you were in Kean's, you just got to know 'em all.

Well, Gale II—Dan Arena designed that—had actually some advancements compared to some of the other boats, with the beveled non-trips on the back.

I, to this day, have always said—taking nothing away from Ted Jones or Ron Jones or anyone—Dan Arena could have been the best boat designer around. Maybe not up in later years now with all the aerodynamics and that, but Dan could design a tremendous boat, and build a good boat. Dan just was not the



Lee Schoenith was away from racing while he served as an Army MP during the Korean War

Schoenith Family Collection

greatest businessman in the world and just never seemed to get everything together. But, he did... Well, he designed the *Great Lakes II*, which was a good boat.

The record-setter *Miss U.S. I.*

Yeah. Dan did a great job.

How did it feel to get into a three-pointer then, with *Gale II*?

Well, it was like getting out of an old tractor, jumpin' into a brand-new Cadillac. It was really fun to drive.

It didn't have a tail fin the first year.

No. The first year it did not have a tail fin.

Did that cause any stability problems?

I don't think so. I really never noticed a big difference between having one and not. In fact, in those days, the only real purpose we felt a tail fin had was the end of it, the rudder—like, that we would cock to help compensate for the torque. Well, the torque a few years later in design of propellers and rudders and off-setting rudders, eliminated most of the torque anyway.

Now, then in '52 they did add the tail fin.

Yes.

But you, at that point, got drafted, and you weren't really driving very much.

I was drafted in '51 and while I raced

in '51, I was in the Army. I used to get long weekend passes to go racing. And then in '52, I was overseas. In fact, I went through Seattle in February of '52 and came back in February of '53. And that year, we raced in the Silver Cup here in Detroit, which we won, with Danny Foster driving, and I think we went to the President's Cup and didn't do too well. But, we didn't go out west or anything that year.

Why was that?

I wasn't here, and it was really my dad's decision that he didn't want to campaign the boat all over without me here drivin' it. He did it in Detroit.

The boat had started winning at that point.

Well, it won the one race, the Silver Cup in '52.

That came after the Gold Cup, didn't it?

Yes.

Okay. How did it happen that Foster was asked to drive when you weren't available?

Danny was always, in my estimation, and a lot of people's, I think, one of the better drivers of that time. And, I don't really remember why, because I wasn't here, but evidently he wasn't driving anything and dad just asked him to drive. Dan drove for us, in fact, the year



Joe Schoenith

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after. He drove one heat of the Silver Cup, and then when Bill Cantrell got hurt in Madison in the sixties, I asked Dan, then, to fill in for Cantrell. He drove in San Diego and Lake Tahoe.

Then you came back and drove in '53.

Yeah. I drove all of '53 and '54.

And won the national championship.

In '53, '4, and '5.

When you were in the Army, you were in basic training with Bill Muncey.

Well, that's a whole story in itself.

You became an MP, so...

Well, what happened was [laughter]... As I mentioned...

You used to sneak Bill in the trunk of your car.

Yeah. Well, as I mentioned, Kean's Marina here was owned by three Kean brothers. And Louis Kean... I used to see him down there on Thursday nights, or whatever it was, in a uniform. And I used to kid him about being in the Boy Scouts, and you know, "what are you doin' in that?" Well, then the Korean thing got going and someone mentioned to me that Louis Kean was called back in the Army. And, then, not too long later, I got drafted, and when you got drafted in Detroit, you went through Battle Creek, Michigan—Fort Custer. And, someone said, "Hey, you know, Louie Kean's

at Fort Custer." So, when I got up there, you know, I didn't know anything about anything, I didn't even have a uniform yet, and so forth and so on, I kept asking everyone if they knew Louie Kean. Well, the next day, some guy came in and grabbed me by the arm and took me to this office, and I'm sitting there waiting and finally they called me in. I walk in, there's Louie sitting behind a desk. I said... Now, I'm a buck private, and I said, "Hi, Louie, how are you?" Here, he's a bird colonel, he was camp commander. And I didn't know what that rank even meant, but it's pretty high up.

And then I went through basic training there, and I was there for, like, four or five months, and someone called me and said, "Hey, Bill Muncey got drafted. He's comin' through." Well, by now I was transferred to the reception center, and I went through the records and got ahold of the guys I knew and that, and found out Bill was comin' in, so I arranged to keep Bill at Fort Custer, because Bill, as you know, was a very fantastic musician. He wound up in the band at Fort Custer for a while. Of course, being a recruit and not having basic training, he wasn't allowed to leave the post. But, I'd stick him in the trunk of the car and sneak him back to Detroit to meet his girlfriend.

Who became his wife.

Yeah, he finally married her. Yes.

Well, moving on in boat racing, in '53, Gale III came along. Ah...

Gale III, well actually, was built in '52 while I was away, and finished the winter of '53.

And, who did actually design that boat? Was it...

No, that was designed by... Ah....

Was Lyle Ritchie the guy?

No. Lyle Ritchie was involved in it, and a man named Leonard Helpke was very much involved in it. And the design of the boat was basically as close to a copy of *Slo-mo-shun* as we could come. And, the big innovation in that boat was the fact it was a single engine, twin propeller.

Yeah, that's what I wanted to ask you about. How the gearbox looked, and how did it work?

Well, it was just a gearbox that bolted on an Allison, and it had two shafts come out of it, and one turned right hand and one turned left hand. And, it had the single rudder in the middle. And, there was a lot of other technical things put in that boat that were too technical, and eventually they were taken out. And, the boat never really did run too good, although it qualified once. My dad qualified it.

In '57.

He got in an awful lot of trouble with the IRS and our auditor's lawyer, but he did it.

Now, did you drive the boat?

Yes. Oh, I drove the boat many times.

Trying to qualify, testing?

Testing, qualifying. I never drove it in competition because we always had another boat, the *Gale IV*, the *Gale V*, that were much better.

And the Three really only showed up in '53, and not again until '57, that one time.

Yeah. That's right. We experimented with it, and tried, and it just never... In fact, I drove it out... Jack Schafer set up a mile record run in front of the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club.

Yeah.



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A frustrated Lee Schoenith stands on the front deck of *Gale III*, a boat with opposite-rotating propellers that never met expectations. Note the exhaust pipes on the boat's transom.

“Cantrell had an idea of how to design a boat, and put in a left-hand engine instead of a right-hand engine ... because we felt the centrifugal force would help you in the turn.”

While the *Gale IV* was being built in Les Staudacher's shop, Lee Schoenith saw another new boat that Staudacher had built on speculation. The Schoeniths purchased the boat and named it *Gale V*. It's shown here as it appeared in 1954 with its teardrop sponsons.

And we just went out because Jack asked us to, so he wouldn't be the only boat there, and it was rough, and nothin' ever happened. At least I had a ride out... Way out in Lake St. Clair to the site.

Now, what were some of those early sites like?

Well, the early race sites, ah, we raced just about anywhere with very little protection, very little safety facilities, and everything else. Lookin' back on it, we were rather silly to do it the way we did it. At New Martinsville, West Virginia; Elizabeth City, North Carolina; and up in Lansing, Michigan, once; and the St. Clair River up here in Michigan, which is just unheard of to ever think of racing in, and of all the places we raced back in those days, about the only place I could even think of that could even think of having a race today is Elizabeth City. But, we raced in a lot of crazy places.

Water was usually rough, turns tight.

Well, bad water, bad turns. And we raced over here in Canada, behind Peach Island, between Peach Island and the Canadian shoreline, which I used to get in the boat at Kean's for my start. I'd drive from the United States to Canada and make my start. And, uh, you had to drive through all the freighters and the pleasure boats and that. And, that was a terrible racecourse. I look at it now and wonder how we ever got around it. But the last time we raced there was 1954.

Well, in '54 you had two new boats.

Yes.

Gale IV and Gale V.

Uh huh. That, well, I'll tell you how that happened. Cantrell had an idea of how to design a boat, and put in a left-hand engine instead of a right-hand engine, whichever way you want to look at it, he changed rotations, and we had a... Built a gearbox to do that, because we felt the centrifugal force would help you in the turn. And, we went up to Les Staudacher's up in Kawkawlin, Michigan, and asked Les to build the boat. We had the design and that, which he agreed to do. While I was there, there was a brand-new boat sitting on the floor. And, I asked him whose that was. He said, "Nobody's. I just built it." So, I got up and looked at it, and I asked Les how much he wanted for it. And he told me. And I says, "Well, that doesn't sound too bad, Les," I said, "except I don't need an engine 'cause I got a lot of engines," and so on. So, he took off "X" number of dollars, and I said, "I don't need a gearbox," so he took the gearbox off, and there was a couple other things on the boat that I didn't need and we took that off. And the bottom line was, I paid him \$5,500 for a brand-new boat, painted. All I had to do was the engine and a few other things in it and go out and run it. And, that was the *Gale V*.

That was the Five.

The original *Gale V*.

And, Cantrell... Now, Staudacher built the *Four*, too. He built the *Four* the same year. The *Five* was sitting there done, and since we had gone up to get the *Four* built, I called the other one the *Five*.

Ah, okay. And then the Five that first year had



Bob Carver Photos

the teardrop sponsons.

Teardrop sponsons, right. We changed that, that next winter.

You didn't care for it, or...?

Well, the boat, we were having problems with the way we wanted it to ride, and aerodynamically we weren't too smart, but a few other people came along and they mentioned the fact they thought that those teardrop sponsons were causing an air-flow problem, and to eliminate 'em, which we did. It seemed to help. But at the same time, we got new propellers and, you know, back in those days you were trying different props and different wedges on the sponsons and so forth and so on, and the boat turned out to be pretty good.

Yeah. Won a Gold Cup and a national championship.

Yes.

Did you ever drive the *Four* at that time?

I drove the *Four* a couple times. I never drove it in competition, though. But I...

You definitely liked the *Five* better?

Yes.

What was different about it, in terms of driving? That you can remember.

Oh, there wasn't anything big, ah, difference, ah, maybe it was the fact that Cantrell had the cockpit set up the way he wanted it, and maybe a couple other little things. I didn't like the gearbox in the *Gale IV*. It came right through the cockpit and the shaft was up around your ankles. Ha, ha. That never thrilled me too much! Maybe that was one of the reasons. But, there wasn't that much difference, really, in the two boats.

Uh hmm. They were basically the same size and...

Oh, they were the same size and width, and that.

Same engine.

Same engine, just different rotation, and things like that.

Now, that was the same year they started playing with the right-hand rudder, left-hand rudder.



Bob Carver Photos

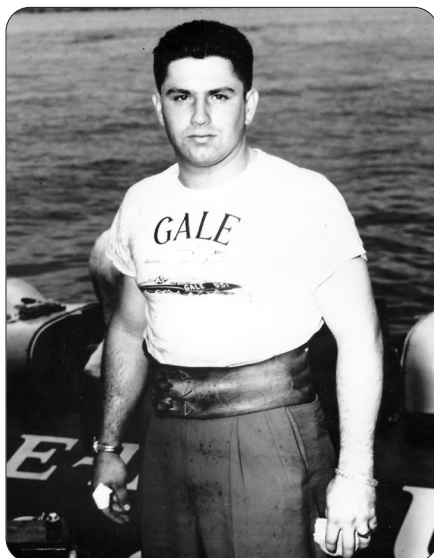


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Byron Lang

TOP: The Schoeniths also introduced the *Gale IV* in 1954. While nearly identical to *Gale V*, its propeller rotated in the opposite direction. **MIDDLE:** The *Gale* team in 1954. From the left, Bill Cantrell, driver of *Gale IV*; Joe Schoenith, team owner; and Lee Schoenith, driver of *Gale V*. **ABOVE:** The two *Gale* boats in the pits together in Seattle.



Lee Schoenith

Yes, we had it set up that it could go on either side. And we tried it on both sides, and put it... Wound up likin' it over on the left better, and it remained on the left side up until now, when these boats are tryin' it on both sides.

Was it just harder to steer around a corner with the right-hand sided?

Well, yes, due to the torque. See, all of the boats originally had the rudders right in the middle. And the prop blast caused a lot of problems. And then it was just tryin' to find out where to put it. And it wound up that it was better on the left.

For that style of hull.

For that style of hull. And you've gotta remember, we didn't have these enormous, large skid fins.

Yeah.

You know, I look at these skid fins now, my good lord, they're three-four feet long, and a couple feet wide. Ours was a little fin maybe five inches deep and 15 inches long. Probably wasn't big enough to do anything. But we had it on anyway.

Yeah. Now, that was the same year Cantrell wound up in the rose garden at Seattle.

1954 in Seattle, right.

And that was because they'd switched the rudder back and forth and didn't tell him?

No, no, no. Something... The rudder arm...

The rudder stop?

...went past dead center and locked...

Oh.

...is what happened. Miraculously, it didn't cause hardly any damage to the boat, and no one got hurt.

Nobody on shore, either.

No. Uh unh.

Do you remember what the situation was like when he came back to the pits afterwards, and things your dad may have said, and...

Well, back then, the big competition was naturally *Slo-mo IV* and *Slo-mo V*, and against the *Gale IV* and *V*, and I said to Cantrell, "Well," I said, "You kind of watch out for *Slo-mo V* and Lou Fageol and I'll watch out for Taggart, and lets try an' nail em' on the start," which we did our best. And, I drove the whole heat and I'm lookin' for Cantrell and never could find him. Finally, I pulled back in the pits and Bill's sittin' on the trailer, no boat. I said, "Well, where's the boat?" And he told me what happened, and he was just kinda dejected with his head hanging down. [laughter]

Well, the next year, you won the

Gold Cup.

Yes, '55 out in Seattle.

And, what's your impression of that race? I mean, how it happened that you won and Muncey thought he was going to win, and...

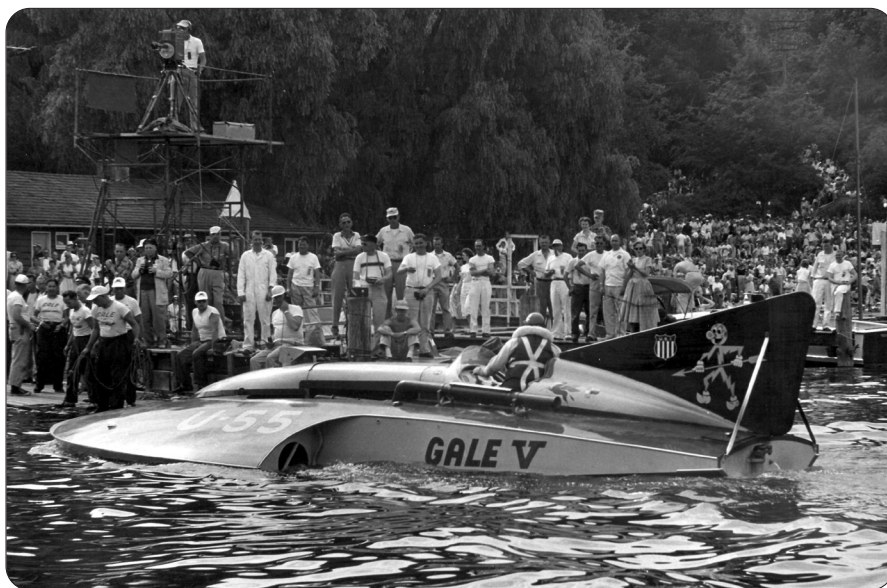
Well, you gotta remember one thing. Back in those days...

Bonus points.

...They had bonus points. You got 400 points for the fastest race, and 400 points for the fastest heat. But in order to get the heat points, you had to finish the race. Well, *Slo-mo-shun IV* had the fastest heat, but didn't finish, and got no bonus points. And we had good racin' all day long, and when Bill Muncey beat me in a heat, it wasn't by very much. And when I beat him, I beat him by a lot. And it wound up that after everything was added up, I won by two and a half seconds [sic], which, you know, to this day I think in the record book it's still a record for a 90-mile race. You gotta remember, we were running three, 30-mile heats.

Yeah.

And last week, in Madison, the whole race was 37 and a half miles. So, you know, these guys can say what they want, but when you drove 90 miles, three heats of 30 miles each, in those boats, it



As the TV cameras watched, Lee Schoenith and *Gale V* approach the Mt. Baker pits after the final heat of the 1955 Gold Cup. At this point, he wasn't aware that he had won the race.



Seen from another angle, as Lee Schoenith prepares to leave *Gale V*, the team helps secure the boat to the dock after the final heat of the 1955 Gold Cup.

was a day's work.

Oh, yeah. Did you have a pretty good idea that you'd won the race when you came back after the...

No, I really didn't. I'll tell you who came up to me and told me that according to his calculations and time we had won was George Simon, the owner of *Miss U.S.* And then we questioned after that. And then it took the officials I don't know how many hours [actually, about 30 minutes] to figure it out, which you should be able to figure out in two seconds with stop watches and not even a calculator, just a piece of paper and a pencil. Ah, so, they finally came back and admitted yes, we had won.

Because Muncey was having ... the Thriftway people were having a real celebration.

Well, they already threw Muncey in the water and had a party, but I took the trophy home. [laughter.]

Now, at that point, you were becoming quite a villain in Seattle. You were playing the press and getting a lot of publicity for boat racing in general. What was your technique and how did it work?

Well, it really came by accident. The press started it, and I picked it up. And I'm, you know, I could see a good thing

there for boat racing and for Detroit and for Seattle, so I kept it going. But the funny part was, when they got the big rivalry between Muncey and me, and here we were best of friends, went back to our childhood, like I said earlier, I snuck him out of camp, and had a helluva... Bill and I would, we'd go at it with the papers in the pits all day, then we'd go out at night, have a sandwich together and laugh about it. But it made good press, and I personally think that probably, that was one of the things that helped boat racing immensely back in those years was the rivalry that was brought up between Detroit and Seattle.

Did that exist as much in the press here in Detroit?

No. Naw, the press here in Detroit would mention the fact that the big rivalry was in Seattle, with the press. Ah, they did a good job here of good stories and that.

And elsewhere around the country it was rather unknown, I suppose.

Well, it would be unknown, but then somehow either Muncey or I would bring it up, just to get a little extra press going wherever we were. It got to be pretty well nationally known there was a rivalry between Detroit and Seattle. And, I don't it hurt anybody. I think it maybe

helped everybody.

The Pepsi got involved in it as well.

Well, *Pepsi* got involved in it.

When they raced here for the Gold Cup.

Yeah, in 1956. Ah, I gotta say this, and I mean, I remember it very well, I remember seeing the films and everything, Muncey did hit a buoy. [laughter] And it was called improperly, and back then we did not have an Unlimited commissioner, we did not have a chief referee with the power he has today, and that Gold Cup was not settled until November, in Washington, DC, by the APBA Council, who wasn't even at the race. I mean, it was ridiculous. I think that's when I really made my mind up that I was gonna become commissioner and start a commission of our own and run ourselves.

Make some changes.

Well, we made a gigantic change. See, we used to race under the Inboard Commission. We followed the same rules as the 48s, the 225s, and it didn't pertain to the Unlimiteds. And then, finally, we got our own commission and started up in '59 [the Unlimited Racing Commission was formed in 1957].

We were still talking about '55. The Gale VI was built that year.

Gale VI was built that year, yes, and raced in 1956.

It entered one race in 1955 and didn't qualify or something, and it actually made its competition debut in '56.

In '56, yes.

And you started driving that boat in '56.

Yes, uh huh.

That was the same year, in '56, they built a second Gale V.

Yes, we built, what we, I always call the small *Gale V*.

Now, why was the first Gale V retired? What was... Well, Gale IV kept running.

Well, *Gale IV* was sold to Bob Schroeder.

The next year.

Yes.

But the *Four* was at the Gold Cup in '56.

Well, in '56, we qualified the *Gale IV*, the *Gale V*, and the *Gale VI* in 15 minutes. We qualified three boats in a row. Roy Duby qualified the *Four*, Cantrell the *Five*, and I qualified the *Six*. And, you know, we just had more boats than we needed, and Bob Schroeder came along and wanted to buy a boat, and we sold him a boat. And, you know, I was trying, I mean, they still today even, ah, you have a good thing, and you try and improve it. And, uh, we thought by building a smaller *Gale V*, and a lighter *Gale V*, it would be faster and accelerate better.

What kind of shape was the first one in at the end of '55?

Oh, it was in fine shape. There was no problem with it.

But, you didn't sell the boat.

No, we kept it. There's a few boats I didn't sell, and a few I did. Ah, back in those days, ah, the hulls were probably one of the cheapest parts of the whole thing.

So, getting a new one was just a few thousand dollars.

And Staudacher could build it in a matter of 12 weeks, tops... Ten to 12 weeks. So, you never had a problem on waitin' for one and, you know, you'd try a little different design here, design there. We didn't have this fancy honeycomb stuff and all that.

Yeah, it was all wood and...

Well, with aluminum sheeting on it, yeah.

Ah, how was *Gale VI*? You had two engines in that thing. That must've been a little different boat to handle.

Well, it was tremendously different.

It was a Ted Jones design, too.

Yes. One of the main reasons was it was so heavy. And it was, you know, 36 feet long. And it was a big thing to drive. I mean, you were looking at 12,000 pounds. When you had both engines running right, you had a lot of power. But the trouble was, you couldn't use it all the time.

Yeah. Now, Ted Jones designed it. Did he have input from you and your dad about how you wanted the boat set up? Was the twin-engine idea...?

No, the twin-engine idea was ours. Well, we really copied Jack Schafer and the *Such Crust [III]*. I drove the *Such Crust* once, the twin-engine, and I was just amazed at the power. And I knew that even his engines weren't as good as ours. And, I just felt, boy, with two of our engines in a boat like this, it could really be a world beater. But, even looking back now and talking to some of the drivers that drove *Such Crust*, ah, the twin-engine one, they were just horrible to try and drive. I mean, you got your brains beat out and, ah, they were bad. Probably the thing back in those days I shoulda done was run it through the measured mile. Probably could've set a mile record with no problem back then. And, but, we just... It was one of those things, you know, you're always tryin' and experimenting, you know.

When did you drive the *Such Crust*?

Oh, I forget. One year, here...

Just for testing? It wasn't during a heat.

Yeah. I asked Jack. No, it was driving the race here, during qualifying, and I asked Jack if I could take it out for a ride, and he let me. And, I even forget how fast I went. I know I was much impressed, though.

Um hmm. I never knew that. Did you drive any other boats at that time?

Oh, I drove Bud Saile's twin-engine boat one time.

The *Miss Wayne*?

Miss Wayne. I drove that up at, ah, out in Nevada. I forget what lake it was at. It wasn't Tahoe.

Lake Mead?

It might've been Lake Mead, ah...

I think he was there in '56.

Yeah, that's probably when, about when I drove that. I drove that in a race.

Oh, huh.

Yeah. Oh, I drove a few other boats in races. *Wha Hoppen*, and...

Of course, that had been the *Wha Hoppen Too*, it was your old *Gale II*.

Yeah. There were a couple other boats. I can figure... I drove, down in Madison, Indiana, one year, I drove a boat. I forget what boat it was, now. For some reason, I didn't have a boat there. I had one, maybe broke it or something, I don't know.

1957 was the year your dad qualified the *Gale III* here.

You're tellin' me that, but I don't believe it. I think it was earlier than that. I could be wrong. [He was]

1957 Detroit Memorial.

Well, I, I can't remember retirin' that boat for two or three years and bringing it back out.

It was sold to Gordon Deneau.



Lee Schoenith drove this boat in 1958, the third to carry the *Gale V* name, during his final appearances as a driver.

Bob Carver Photos



Lee Schoenith spent most of the 1956, '57, and '58 seasons driving the gigantic twin-Allison-powered *Gale VI*.

Yeah.

And he was racing the *What-A-Pickle* in '56 and '57.

It was sold to Gordon Deneau and never quite paid for, and I took it back. [laughter]

Well, when your dad did qualify the boat, he got some flack from his lawyer and some other problems.

Well, we were havin' a problem at that time with the IRS.

Yeah.

On disallowing boat racing as a business deduction. And, our lawyer felt very strongly that hurt our case somewhat. And, ah...

Why did he feel that way? I don't quite follow the reasoning.

Well, if you remember, we were sued by the government for '53, '54, and '55. We went to court, we lost the case, the judge at the bottom of the transcript put down that he felt the Schoeniths were personally enjoying this as a hobby, and disallowed it.

Umm.

We subsequently sued the government for '56, '57, and '58, and won the case, and got our money back, and proved it as a business deduction. And right after that, George Simon went to court with the government. He won on the same basis of our case, and since then the boats have always been a business deduction. [Warning: Some of what Schoe-

nith says about IRS case is distorted.]

Yes. When Simon won his case, it was pretty much...

Well, we won ours before that, and then Simon won, and since then it's been called a legal business deduction.

Um hmm. What things do you think Simon was doing differently that allowed him to win the case the first time?

Well, we had won prior to him. [Not true.]

Okay.

I mean, he was going in there with a...

With your second case.

With our second case being won.

Okay.

And, we had, on our first case, we had an old, senile federal judge who slept through half the case.

Ah...

And, I mean, we were going to appeal it, and we didn't, and if you've read the transcript, I forget, it was like 44 pages, we won the case, to the last paragraph. And we found out later he didn't write it, the bailiff wrote it, or something. You know, it was one of those unfortunate things.

Hmm. Well, in '58, I think it was, you flipped the *Gale VI*.

Yes, Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

What did that do to you, and how did the accident happen?

Oh, it hurt my little body. And

[laughter], there again, the race should never have been run. I had won the first two heats, and we went out in the final heat, and there were swells three to four feet high. And I was doing my best just to try and keep it going. And I just got in a turn and hooked it and... And, I flipped it. It was not a serious, great big flip, but, you know, you flip a boat it...

Just rolled over on you?

Well, it did a little more than roll. It flipped over and threw me out and I bent the steering wheel and everything trying to hang on, and, but got thrown clear. And I was battered and bruised, but nothing broken or anything.

It did hurt your back, though.

Yeah, my back. Well, it didn't help.

Your back was already bothering you?

Yeah, the back was already bothering me, I think from the boats, and at that time we had just opened the Roostertail [Restaurant] and I was working there a lot of hours. My wife was pregnant, having our second child, and my back was sore, and I just said: "Business, back, and babies, I quit." But I did drive a few races after I flipped. I finished the year out and then I retired. ❖

Next month, the interview continues with Lee Schoenith discussing his career as a boat owner and as the sport's commissioner.

MOTORBOAT RACING IN LESCHI

A look at the sport from the other side of the Lake Washington Floating Bridge

BY ROGER LIPPMAN

Editor's Note: The views expressed in the following story represent those of the author and not necessarily those of the Unlimited News-Journal.

Ask any 10 people when powerboat racing first occurred in Seattle's Leschi neighborhood, just north of the I-90 Floating Bridge, and you'll probably get at least nine blank stares. The number of people in the Seattle area who would answer correctly could probably be counted on the fingers of one hand until the publication of this article—or, until the arrival of the book *Slo-mo-shun* by Andy Muntz.

Motorboat racing in the Northwest began in July 1904 in Portland, on the Willamette River. As the early motorized boats (known then as autoboats) gained popularity, a race was organized in Seattle in 1906 on, believe it or not, January 1. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported the next day that 2,000 people watched the Seattle Mid-Winter Regatta from the Leschi Park Pavilion, nearby boathouses, and steamers and launches on the lake. The winner averaged 25 mph over the 30-mile race.

The next race was run off Leschi Park on July 4, in the presence of a large crowd, according to the *P-I*. The year's

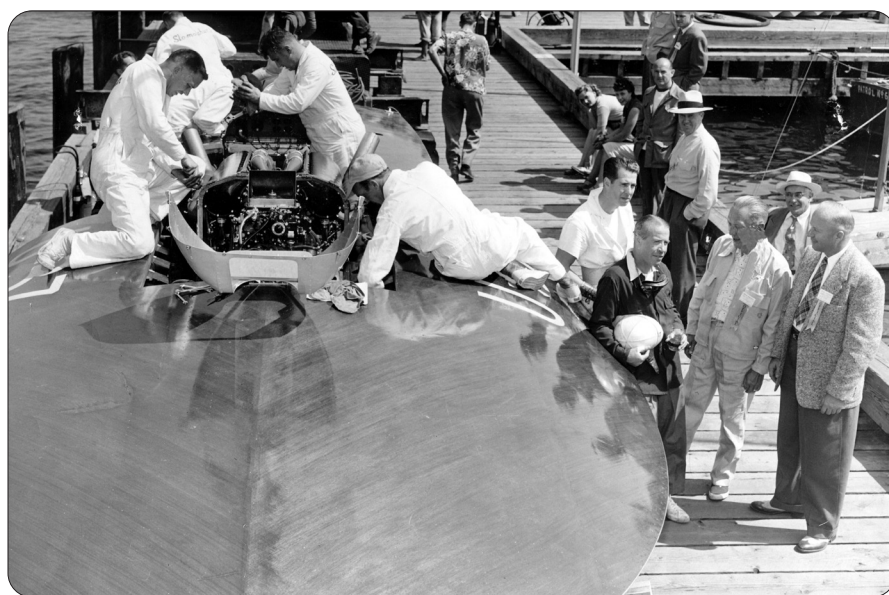
racing season concluded with the Labor Day Regatta, circumnavigating Mercer Island on a 16-mile course that began and ended at Leschi. The winner finished in an hour and 7 minutes.

Fast forward a half century to the dawn of modern boat racing in Seattle.

Growing up in nearby Madrona in the 1950s, I became a confirmed hydroplane fan, like most other kids here. Recently I have discovered several Leschi and near-Leschi connections to the

sport, including some of the best-known events of Seattle's entire boat-racing history.

In 1950, Seattle Chrysler-Plymouth dealer Stanley Sayres commissioned the unlimited hydroplane *Slo-mo-shun IV*, which promptly set a world speed record of 160 mph on a one-mile straightaway course on Lake Washington. The team then went to Detroit to challenge the established powers of big-time boat racing for the Gold Cup, the sport's premier



As Ted Jones, Lou Fageol, and Stan Sayres and others stand on the Leschi dock, the *Slo-mo* crew works on *Slo-mo-shun V*. The dock served as the team's home during each Seattle race from 1951 to 1956.

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

prize. The *Slo-mo* conquered the fleet, and with the victory it gained the right to stage the following year's race on its home waters.

The 1951 race, produced by the recently created Seafair, captivated the imagination of the city. As the day's racing continued, many thousands of people viewing it on KING-TV, Seattle's only station, left their couches to watch from the lake shore in the Mt. Baker community. That race was won by Sayres's newer boat, *Slo-mo-shun V*.

The hydroplanes could be heard in Madrona, Leschi, Mt. Baker, and miles beyond. But it was the sound of an age of innocence, of swords (fighter planes) into plowshares (race boats). The big World War II-surplus warplane engines bringing entertainment in an era of (relative) peace and prosperity. It was the joyous soundtrack of my youthful generation.

There was also the hometown pride that upstart Seattle, a provincial outpost that still had wooden sidewalks in parts of downtown, had conquered the titans of Detroit who had dominated the sport for over three decades. Aircraft technology, both engines and hull designs, had displaced the era of automotive-powered dominance. Ironically, it was a local car dealer whose boat conquered Motown and brought the prize home to the Jet City.

What a contrast to today's Seafair. With bone-jarring warplanes strafing Leschi homes, spewing pollution, and traumatizing refugees from war-torn countries, the Blue Angels are meant to glorify U.S. militarism. The idyllic promises of childhood didn't bring us to a world at peace.

The onshore center of racing activity was located at Mt. Baker Beach, which was cramped and poorly suited for the intensity of the action. At the request of the race committee, Stan Sayres's *Slo-mo* crew utilized Leschi's Lake Washington Yacht Basin (YABA), on the water at 120 Lakeside Avenue, as its base for race



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



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TOP: While most of the competitors pitted at Mt. Baker Park during the first Seattle Gold Cups, the *Slo-mo* team operated from the Lake Washington Yacht Basin a mile to the north. Here, *Slo-mo-shun IV* sits on the Leschi dock during the 1953 Gold Cup. The old Seaborn's Marina is at the center in the far background. **MIDDLE:** The *Miss Pepsi* team also operated at Leschi when they visited Seattle. **ABOVE:** As spectators watch from above, Lou Fageol makes one of his "flying starts" as he drives *Slo-mo-shun V* under the Floating Bridge while traveling from Leschi to the racecourse.



Detroit's *Gale IV* settled in a rose garden south of Leschi during the 1954 Gold Cup

week. Leschi was the race headquarters from 1951 to 1956 for the Sayres team, the world's fastest boats.

In early August 1951, as the hydroplane races began on the oval three-mile course that stretched from just south of the Floating Bridge most of the way to Seward Park, the boats jockeyed for position near the bridge as they headed for the starting line. The fans were taken aback that Seattle's team, the two *Slo-mo-shun* boats, were nowhere to be seen—until they came zooming under the bridge, straight out of Leschi, passing the slow-churning gaggle of Detroiters.

Slo-mo IV went inside, and *Slo-mo V* went to the outside, hitting the line just as the starting gun fired and pulling away from the rest of the fleet. This “flying start,” sometimes joined by other boats, continued to 1955, when it was banned by racing authorities.

The master of the flying start, *Slo-mo-shun V* driver Lou Fageol, was later involved in the most spectacular accident of the era on Lake Washington. During the 1955 time trials, he was roaring up the backstretch when the boat caught a gust of wind, lifted up, and did a complete somersault in the air. Fearing the worst, Fageol bailed mid-flight. At more than 140 miles per hour, he executed a perfect dive into the lake, entering the

water headfirst with his arms stretched out ahead of him. He survived, but with serious injuries that ended his racing career.

The Sayres team dominated racing in Seattle up to 1956, by which time both boats had been destroyed in racing accidents. In that period, there were estimates that hundreds of thousands of people came to the races each year.

Here I'm going to stretch the neighborhood boundaries a bit—just by a block or so into Mt. Baker. During the 1954 race, Detroit-based *Gale IV*, coming out of the north turn to start Heat 2, ex-

perienced a steering failure and headed straight for the shoreline. The boat leaped a short concrete bulkhead and landed in the midst of a rose garden where the family of Dr. Forest Black was hosting a race-watching party. No one was injured. After the boat came to a stop, Dr. Black went to the driver, Bill Cantrell, and asked if he had an invitation to the party. Replying that it was all a big mistake, Cantrell climbed out of the boat, brushed himself off, and somehow found his way back to the Mt. Baker pit area.

How did *Gale IV* happen to lose its steering control?

This was an opportunity for Seattle fans to indulge in *schadenfreude*. *Gale IV* and its stablemate, *Gale V*, had almost identical paint jobs. The most identifiable distinction, from the rear, was that one of them had its rudder mounted to the left of the propeller, and on the other boat the rudder was on the right. In an attempt to confuse the Seattle team, the *Gale* crew swapped rudder sides on both boats just before the race. Unfortunately for the team, though, they failed to properly secure the *Gale IV*'s rudder, and it worked its way loose by the beginning of the second heat. ❖

The author writes about the history of Leschi, where he has lived since 1976.



The marina at Seattle's Leschi district as it appears today.

Slo-mo-shun and the story behind the 1953 Gold Cup

The following is an excerpt from Chapter 14 of the new book *Slo-mo-shun* by Andrew Muntz. By 1953, Stan Sayres had become one of Seattle's biggest celebrities. His *Slo-mo-shun IV* hydroplane had set a world speed record in 1950 then went to Detroit later that summer and won the two biggest events the sport had to offer: the Gold Cup and the Harmsworth Trophy. The Gold Cup victory brought the prestigious race to Seattle in 1951, which was won by Sayres's newest boat, the *Slo-mo-shun V* and its driver Lou Fageol. In 1952, the *Slo-mo IV* again came out victorious with Stanley Dollar driving, but family obligations forced Dollar to decline the opportunity to drive the boat the following year. To replace him, Sayres hired Paul Sawyer, one of the country's most outstanding limited-class drivers. Sawyer moved to Seattle and spent most of the summer getting the boat ready for the Gold Cup in early August.

The trucks carrying both *Gale II* and *Miss U.S.* rolled across Snoqualmie Pass on Sunday, August 2, a week before the race and with qualifying scheduled to start the next day. Their teams had checked into the Hill-Top Motel outside of Bellevue. The two red *Such Crust* boats had meanwhile passed through Spokane that day, would spend the night in Moses Lake, and planned to arrive in Seattle on Monday. *Miss Great Lakes II* was somewhere farther east, but also expected the next day.

At Hunts Point on that Sunday, Fageol was in town, but didn't take *Slo-mo V* out for a brief run until late in the day. Engine builder Howard Gidovlenko drove the boat the day before and punched the accelerator as it was cruising at 120 miles per hour. The engine not only came apart, but the propeller was lost. The crew spent most of Saturday night and Sunday removing the shattered Rolls Merlin and replacing it with another.

Slo-mo IV was also in the boathouse that day, having seen action the day before. Sawyer drove it—he spent about a half hour going around the racecourse with Sayres sitting by his side. Sawyer thought the test run had gone well and that everything seemed ready for the Gold Cup. Sayres, however, had something different in mind.

An important qualification for serving on the *Slo-mo* team was the ability to get along with others. Given the number of long hours the crew spent together, it was a critical trait. But, during the four months that Paul Sawyer was on the team, that standard was put to a test. His relationship with the crew became strained.

Sawyer had his own way of doing things, and often that wasn't the way his crew preferred. And even though he had set speed records in the 7-litre class, he seemed uncomfortable pushing *Slo-mo IV*. "I was there many hours watching him and his wife struggling over whether they wanted him to drive, or not," Don Ibsen remembers.

Then one day before the start of Gold Cup qualifying, Sawyer took the boat out for a high-speed trial run as crew chief Mike Welsch sat in the passenger seat. Sawyer let off the throttle when the boat reached 145 miles per hour, and when Welsch motioned to him to go faster, he responded by shaking his head. Welsch then reached over with his left foot and pushed on the throttle himself. That started an argument that continued long after the boat returned to the boathouse.

"He won't open up the damned boat," Welsch complained to Sayres, so Sayres said he'd go for a ride with him. Same thing. The boat got to about 145 miles per hour, and that's where he



Paul Sawyer

stayed. And, when Sayres motioned for him to go faster, he refused—shaking his head. “Paul, you can’t win a heat if you don’t get up to about 160 on the straight-away,” he told Sawyer when they got back to the boathouse. “Hell, it will do over 200!”

When the exasperated Sayres told Fageol what happened, the veteran driver’s solution was simple: “Fire him,” he

suggested. “I know a lot of good drivers that would jump at the chance. In fact, Joe Taggart back in Ohio is one of the best and he’s available.”

So, on the Tuesday morning before the Gold Cup, Sayres pulled the plug on Sawyer’s career with the *Slo-mo* team, and Fageol made a phone call to his friend in Canton, Ohio. “Hey, Joe,” he said, “how would you like to drive the world’s fastest boat?”

In making the announcement to reporters, Sayres said he released Sawyer because he “couldn’t get along with the maintenance crews which have been with me since I started with the *Slo-mos* some years ago. Friction had been developing for two and a half months. This is no reflection on his driving or other activities. They are the best. I just couldn’t have anyone come in and disrupt the situation.”

But Sawyer would not walk away quietly. He felt wronged by his dismissal and, perhaps because he was an attorney, had no qualms about making his case. He issued a statement to the press outlining his grievances.

Meanwhile, Taggart was on his way from Ohio to fill the open seat in the *Slo-mo IV*’s cockpit. “Lou called me a

few days before the race and asked me if I’d come out,” he remembered. “I said I gladly would. They bought plane reservations for me and my wife [Pat] and we flew out there.”

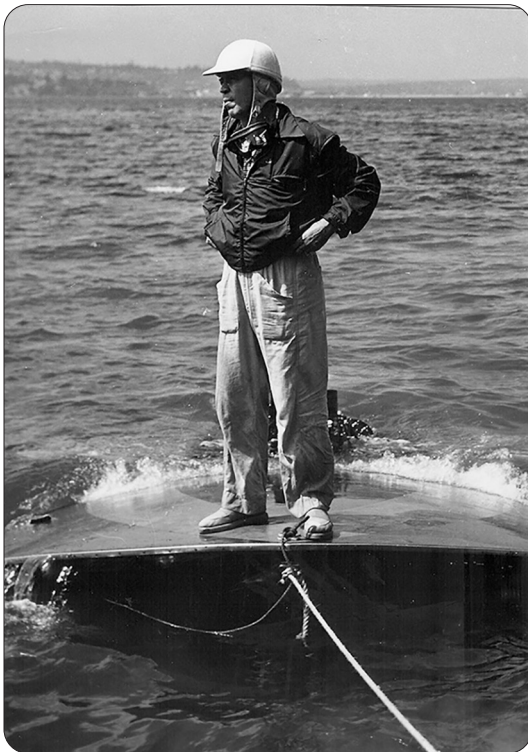
They arrived in Western Washington aboard a Northwest Air Lines flight that landed at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport at eight o’clock on Wednesday evening, the day after he got his phone call from Fageol. But, by then, the team was in turmoil again—this time with a problem that involved *Slo-mo-shun V*.

Fageol had taken the boat out for a run at midday and, at about 1:30 P.M., he steered *Slo-mo V* back toward Hunts Point and reduced his speed so he was more plowing through the water than skipping across it. He then rounded the corner past the Sayres’s home and into Cozy Cove, rumbled past the boathouse, then circled to his left toward the Yarrow Point side of the cove. That’s where Fageol gave the throttle a quick punch to see how fast *Slo-mo V* would accelerate.

“I’d just reached 160 miles per hour when I felt the sheer drop in speed,” Fageol said, “the engine raced, and debris started flying all around me.” A propeller blade had broken off as it was revolving at about 185 times a second. With the spin-



The “Grand Old Lady” *Slo-mo-shun IV* as it appeared in 1953. The boat’s most distinguishing feature that season was its mammoth Fiberlay tail, which was developed with the help of the Boeing Company to help counteract the impact of prop torque and provide better performance in the straightaways. Though it seemed to work, the tail was removed the following year in an effort to save weight.



ning thing suddenly out of balance, it put such a huge force on the driveshaft that, in an instant, the ten-foot-long, one-and-a-half-inch thick piece of K-Monel steel became twisted into the shape of a corkscrew. In the time it takes to snap one's finger, the mangled shaft had whipped around enough to tear a hole four feet long and a foot wide into the bottom of the boat's hull.

The blast of the explosion echoed across Cozy Cove as *Slo-mo V* settled to a stop about a hundred feet offshore from William Worden's home on Yarrow Point.

A Coast Guard patrol boat, which had been

helping to control boat traffic for the test runs, raced to the stricken hydroplane, as did a pleasure boat named *Shutter Bug* with Ken Ollar at the helm. And, *Slo-mo* team members had also been watching from across Cozy Cove at Sayres's boat-house. They dashed to *Seaflow II* and set off toward the boat as its stern sank deeper into the water.

The lake was about twenty-five feet deep where *Slo-mo V* had stopped and was sinking, so those coming to its rescue decided they needed to tow it to shallower water, where a recovery would be easier. They tied a line to the cleat on the hydroplane's bow and, with care and deliberation, coaxed it toward the dock in front of Worden's home. There, *Slo-mo V* finally settled to the bottom in about six feet of water—its nose pointed to the sky.

The team summoned the Navy crash boat *Mary Ann* from Sand Point Naval Air Station across Lake Washington to lift *Slo-mo V* from the water with its big crane. Once the hydro was on the ship's deck, the crew could see the damage for the first time. There was a huge gash in its bottom that started behind the driver's seat. The *Mary Ann* ferried *Slo-mo V* back across the lake to Anchor Jensen's shop, where the shipwrights could give it a closer examination. At least three frames were broken, great hunks of planking were torn, and the stuffing box, battery boxes, and strut were missing.

The Gold Cup was less than four days away and the qualifying period would end on Friday afternoon, which meant fixing it in time would take a miracle, but Sayres decided they may as well try. So, the crew, already exhausted from the

ABOVE: The team's other boat, the *Slo-mo-shun V*, was eliminated from the 1953 Gold Cup before the race began. As Lou Fageol drove it in a test run only days before it was to qualify, the boat threw a prop blade that tore a large hole in the boat's bottom and caused it to sink near Stan Sayres's home on Hunts Point.

LEFT: Fageol stands on the bow of the sinking *Slo-mo V* as it is towed to shallower water,

In the time it takes to snap one's finger, the mangled shaft had whipped around enough to tear a hole four feet long and a foot wide into the bottom of the boat's hull.



Bob Carver Photos

ABOVE: Joe Taggart drives *Slo-mo-shun IV* on the Lake Washington racecourse during the 1953 Gold Cup. **RIGHT:** Team owner Stan Sayres stands next to his Grand Old Lady.

“Through that opening, from her private berth further up the lake, came Stan Sayres’s dynamite-driven *Slo-mo IV*, like a wild animal charging from the gates of hell.”

effort to get the boat ready for qualifying, went to work with the help of the boatbuilders at Jensen’s. “That was a ‘twenty-four/seven’ for three or four days getting that boat back,” Don Ibsen recalled. “I mean, I’m tired just thinking about it.”

About five miles south of Hunts Point at the Lake Washington racecourse, Thursday arrived with none of the Gold Cup challengers yet qualified. *Miss U.S.*, *Gale II*, and *Such Crust V* had made test runs—Cantrell pushed his red and white boat to a lap of eighty-nine miles per hour. But the teams were waiting in Mt. Baker Park for the arrival of the “Gold Cup Special,” the flight from Detroit with Joe Schoenith, Jack Schafer, Chuck Thompson, and many others aboard that arrived on Wednesday evening.

Taggart was the first to qualify, and he did so in stunning fashion. Late Thursday afternoon, with mechanic Martin Headman along for the ride, he circled the course three times aboard the Grand Old Lady at an average speed of 107.5 miles per hour—shattering the record set by *Miss Pepsi* the year before. “Joe Taggart displayed such driving cunning and complete mastery over the *IV* in Thursday’s qualifying run that the Seattle speedboat followers are no longer worried over the Easterner’s qualifications as a driver,” wrote Royal Brougham.

Four other qualifying runs then followed. Cantrell had a run of 96.9 miles per hour in *Such Crust V* and Thompson did 93.6 miles per hour in *Such Crust III*. Foster got *Miss Great Lakes II* into the field with a run of 92.9 miles per hour and Lee Schoenith, in his first race since returning from



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Army duty in Korea, drove *Gale II* at 90.9 miles per hour. His mahogany-colored craft with its lemon-yellow trim featured Reddy Kilowatt on its tail—a cartoon character with lightning-bolt body, arms, and legs. That left only two: the new *Miss U.S.* and *Slo-mo V*, which workers were still repairing at Jensen’s Motor Boat on Portage Bay.

Those thrashing over the boat promised a reporter they were making good progress and hoped to make it by the end of the qualifying period on Friday evening. In case, however, Sayres made a plea to Referee Mel Crook asking if they

could qualify after Friday, as *Gale II* had been allowed after almost sinking during a test run two years before. Permission was therefore granted, as long as the attempt wouldn't delay the scheduled start of the race. The *Miss U.S.* team, plagued all week with hull and prop-shaft issues, also would get another chance.

When the morning of race day arrived, *Miss U.S.* managed to get into the Gold Cup field with a run of over eighty-eight miles per hour, but *Slo-mo V* still wasn't ready. Sayres asked if the boat could compete without qualifying, so Crook took that option to the other owners—who voted it down. “If we had had eight more hours, we would have been ready to go at full speed,” Welsch said. “If we had been allowed to qualify Sunday morning, it would have been a patched-up job.”

That left the boat's older sister, *Slo-mo IV*, alone at the Leschi dock as the first heat approached. Taggart had driven the boat down from Hunts Point, arriving only a half hour before the starting gun was scheduled to blast. Wearing his red life jacket and white helmet, he calmly scanned across the choppy waves whipped up by a brisk breeze. “The water's all right,” he said to a reporter. “That water out there now, that'd be nice back east.”

As the crew examined every inch of their boat and put their last-minute touches on it, Taggart then talked about his opportunity. “The Gold Cup race is just as big to me as the Kentucky Derby,” he said. “The Gold Cup is the last word in boat racing. I've dreamed about winning one of these for years. Everybody wants to win the Gold Cup.”

A crane lifted the hydroplane from its cradle to the water, Taggart climbed into the cockpit and settled into his seat. As soon as he heard the warning cannon from down at the racecourse, he reached over to those toggle switches on the

dashboard. He activated the booster pump, pressed the inertia motor switch, engaged the whirring starter, and tickled the primer. The engine clunked and thumped a few times and then, with a puff of gray smoke and a roar, it came alive, and he was on his way.

A mile south in Mt. Baker Park, as a silver Navy blimp hovered above the huge crowd assembled around the racecourse, the crews of the five Detroit boats also readied their boats for the race. But as the reporter for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* described, while the other teams sent their boats roaring onto the lake, they were also looking to the north. “Their eyes were on the stretch of water beneath the approach to the Floating Bridge. Through that opening, from her private berth further up the lake, came Stan Sayres's dynamite-driven *Slo-mo IV*, like a wild animal charging from the gates of hell. From that moment on, there was defeat and bitterness for the Detroit men and women.”

Taggart didn't do the flying start—he left that his friend Lou Fageol. Rather, he joined the other five hydroplanes as they rounded the north turn and the final few seconds ticked down for the start. The roar of the engines was mixed with the cheers of hundreds of thousand voices as Taggart took the lead across the starting line. The Grand Old Lady's massive new red tail stood tall behind the cockpit amid the white spray shooting high into the air. Following close behind were *Miss Great Lakes II*, *Such Crust V*, and *Miss U.S.*

As the boats rounded the first turn, *Miss Great Lakes*, Taggart's ride from the year before, sputtered and went dead. But Taggart and *Slo-mo IV* pushed farther into the lead. Cantrell and *Such Crust V* were behind by a quarter mile by the time they completed the first lap. Taggart wrote about it in an article

Sandy Ross Collection



Members of the Detroit fleet roar across the starting line of the first heat. From the left, Bill Cantrell in *Such Crust V*, Danny Foster in *Miss Great Lakes II*, and Chuck Thompson in *Such Crust III*.



Slo-mo-shun IV ahead of Dan Arena in *Miss U.S.*

published the next morning in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*:

“I got a little messed up on the start, was caught in a different position than I figured to be. But darned if I didn’t get a break, saw an opening and the boat responded when I stepped on her to climb right through and into the lead. *Miss Great Lakes* was closest to me and going great guns. It might have been a tougher race if he hadn’t had his bad luck right there in the first turn. Nothing was going to catch this *Slo-mo* once she was out of that mess and running. I got a great thrill out of the way she pulled out of that first turn and went on her way. I felt right then this race could be won and handily if we had no accidents.”

Schoenith in *Gale II* passed Cantrell to move into second place. By this time, however, Taggart was well ahead. His lead expanded to a half mile by the end of the second lap. It was a full mile after four times around. And that’s how they stayed to the end, with Taggart and *Slo-mo IV* getting the checkered flag with an average speed of over ninety-five miles per hour. Schoenith was second, Cantrell third, and Thompson in the giant *Miss Such Crust III* finished fourth. Dan Arena tried his best to push *Miss U.S.*, but it struggled so far behind that *Slo-mo IV* lapped it twice.

Taggart “hammered the 1950 and 1952 winner hard around the turns,

drawing gasps from the spectators as he danced from sponson to sponson, but slowed down through those spots where the other craft had dug large holes in the course,” reported Mel Crook in *Yachting* magazine. “The *IV*’s engine, which had sounded progressively rougher through the fourth round, appeared to smooth out later in the race.”

Al Fallon realized his *Miss Great Lakes II* was through when the boat returned to the pits at the end of a tow rope and the team found a twisted prop shaft. “I’d rather pull her out than take a chance on blowing the whole boat with a nasty repair,” he said. “We were right up with the *Slo-mo* when it happened. We were inside of her on the first turn. It’s hard luck.”

Up on the dock at Leschi, the winning *Slo-mo IV* was back on its cradle and the crew again gave it a close inspection. A metal strip on the right sponson had worked itself loose, so the crew removed the screws that held it in place, filled the holes, drilled new holes, and gave it new screws. Meanwhile, Taggart relaxed with a glass of cold milk while Fageol sat next to him unruffled, eating potato salad, fried chicken, and a salami sandwich.

When it became clear that *Slo-mo V* would not get into the race, Sayres told Taggart that Fageol was interested in driving the second heat. Would he mind? “Well, I couldn’t do anything but say, ‘OK,’ because he got me in it.”

Later, as they waited for the next heat, Fageol asked again. “You really don’t mind it if I drive the next heat and you the last?”

“Sure, go ahead,” Taggart answered. To authorize the switch, an official soon arrived from the racecourse with the proper paperwork for Sayres and Fageol to fill out.

“Joe didn’t have to do that,” Don Ibsen said later. “He could have said, ‘No, this is my boat. Sorry. I don’t want to give up a heat of racing.’ But he shared one of the heats with Fageol. Taggart was a prince of a guy doing something like that. That tells a lot about the man. I thought that was just supreme.”

While the *Slo-mo* crew got their boat ready for the second heat, Schafer’s two-boat team was also working hard a mile to the south in the Mt. Baker pits. And they had the services of a secret weapon—none other than Ted Jones. The man credited with the design of the two *Slo-mo* boats had visited Schafer’s Detroit shop a month earlier to help with some changes and was in the pits to be available if they needed any advice.

It had been a busy day for the *Such Crust* crew. During a test run aboard the twin-engine *Such Crust III* the previous afternoon, Thompson crashed into a submerged log that damaged the rudder and pulled out part of its transom. As the hydroplane was towed back to the pits, another boat stayed by its side pumping water from its hull. The repair had taken most of the night, but it made it into the first heat. “Just think,” Schafer said, “I came 2,500 miles to hit a submerged log on such a clean course as this one.”

Though the Seattle fans couldn’t tell who was sitting in the cockpit of *Slo-mo IV* as it circled the racecourse warming up its engine before the second heat started, it became obvious when the boat passed back under the raised span of the Floating Bridge to circle around for a flying start. They knew then that it had to be Fageol.

As Fageol circled north of the bridge

preparing to make his trademark maneuver, Arena joined him aboard *Miss U.S.* Then, the two made their run back under the bridge while the other three made the more traditional start by rounding the north turn. But Fageol immediately found himself trapped—caught in a cluster of speeding hydroplanes. Thompson, meanwhile, was leading the field in *Such Crust III* when he also had to back off. He was too early and had to slow down to avoid jumping the gun. As a result, as the big red and white hydroplane reached the starting line, the others roared past. Cantrell took *Such Crust V* first into the south turn and was ahead down the backstretch—with *Slo-mo IV* right behind. Fageol explained later that he saw “a little daylight and went for it.”

Fageol accelerated to close the gap between him and Cantrell. As he caught the boat, *Such Crust V* slowed to a halt—its propeller gone. But Lee Schoenith was right behind. He was pressing hard in *Gale II*. As Fageol went wide through the south turn at the start of the second lap, Schoenith darted to the inside lane and moved into the lead. By the end of that lap, his boat was ahead of *Slo-mo IV* by about two hundred yards.

Watching from the official barge, Madeleine Sayres had to look away. She sat down behind those standing in front of her and stared off into space.

During their next time around, Fageol pressed the throttle harder. He caught up with Schoenith as the boats screamed down the backstretch, moved ahead, and increased his narrow lead. Then, with only two laps to go, *Gale II* slowed down. A cooling line had broken, and the boat was filling with water. That’s when Caryl Fageol, the driver’s wife sitting next to Mrs. Sayres, had an opportunity to finally relax—had she taken it. Instead, being a veteran of these things, she knew nothing was certain until the race was over. “It sounds like a little sort of blubber in that motor,” she muttered at one point.

But Fageol held on. He crossed the

finish line with an average speed of about ninety-two miles per hour and with a fastest lap—his third—of over 104 miles per hour. Thompson and *Such Crust III* caught the slowing *Gale II* as they approached the finish line and took second place. That meant, going into the third heat, *Slo-mo IV* had a commanding lead of eight hundred points as compared with *Gale II*’s 525 points and *Such Crust III*’s 469 points. The Gold Cup would again belong to Sayres—but only if his boat could finish that last heat.

As soon as the Grand Old Lady returned to the team’s dock at Leschi, the crew made a close inspection of every part—and they found something. There were tiny cracks and signs of stress weakening in the prop shaft and the propeller. “I’ve never seen a pit crew work as hard in my life,” Sayres said of his team, both because of their efforts on the Leschi dock and in trying to get the *Slo-mo V* repaired at Jensen’s. “They worked until they were out on their feet. There never have been crews as good as these in the history of racing.”

As the crew replaced the prop and prop shaft, Sayres, Fageol, and Taggart huddled to develop their strategy. It was simple: Avoid getting blocked by the other drivers at the start, keep an eye on *Gale II*, and drive just fast enough to win the

needed points while also protecting the equipment. “If you run the third heat at seventy-five miles per hour, I think we’re in, but I’m not sure,” Sayres told Taggart. “I don’t want you to drive that slow, Joe.”

“One of the hardest things to do in this race is to hold yourself down,” Taggart explained to a reporter. “The Gold Cup could have been won many times over, in other races, by fellows who just couldn’t be patient.”

By the time the boats roared onto the lake for the third and final heat, the field was down to four. After limping around the course during the first two heats, *Miss U.S.* stayed on the beach. Taggart was also back in the cockpit of *Slo-mo IV*.

Cantrell was first across the starting line and around the first turn in *Such Crust V*. But, before he reached the end of the backstretch, the engine sputtered, and he was through. That left Taggart in the lead with *Gale II* running a strong second about three hundred yards behind at the end of the first lap.

This created a delicate balance for Taggart. While he needed to push his boat hard enough to keep his lead over *Gale II*, he couldn’t push it too hard. He must take it easy on his boat. He watched the manifold pressure gauge, especially, to make sure the engine was consuming the pressure that the supercharger was



A reporter interviews the victorious *Slo-mo* drivers after the Gold Cup. From the left, Joe Taggart, Lou Fageol, and team owner Stan Sayers.

Bob Carver Photos

producing. So, as Taggart wrestled with the steering wheel trying to maintain his boat's arc through the turns, was pounded around in his seat, and endured the blast of the engine in his face, he watched the gauges and pushed *Slo-mo IV* just hard enough to stay in the lead.

Then, *Gale II* faltered. As Taggart continued ahead, Schoenith was getting showered by a spray of oil caused by a failure in the gearbox's lubrication system. He was forced to back off.

While Taggart completed his final laps, Pat, his wife, was urging him on from the official barge. "Come on, Joe!" she yelled. "Two more laps!" The next time around, as the white flag for the officials signaled one more lap to go, she shouted to him again: "Now one more lap! Come on, Joe!"

"*Slo-mo IV* swept over the final lap to the accompaniment of whistles and horn blasts and an appreciative roar from the massed spectators," wrote Mel Crook in his report for *Yachting* magazine. Nearby on the same barge as Crook, Pat Taggart smiled broadly when the checkered flag finally flew for her husband. "The most wonderful moment in my life," she said.

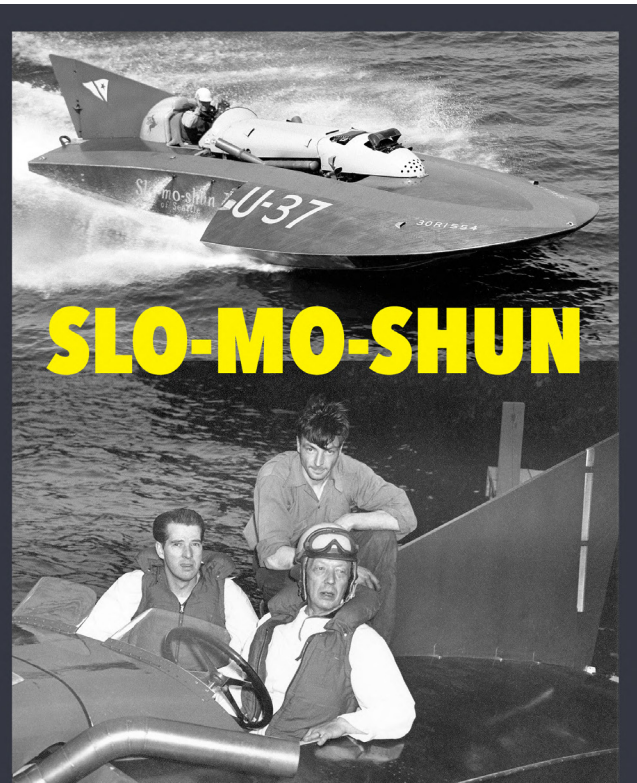
"*Slo-mo-shun IV* of Seattle is the greatest boat I ever laid my hands on," Taggart wrote for the *Post-Intelligencer*. "You dream about perfect riding boats, you talk about terrific power, and you think that some day, some way, a boat can be built that will stay under you for the 90 miles and more. And, here it is, this wonderful boat I had the chance to drive in two heats of the 1953 Gold Cup race Sunday."

In the Mt. Baker pits, however, there wasn't a great deal of happiness, other than the applause and handshakes that Lee Schoenith received after finishing second despite being soaked with oil. "Gee," he grinned. "What happens if you win?"⁴⁷

Jack Schafer was grumbling, though. "Never again," he said as he wiped his brow. "Win, lose or draw, I'm not coming back next year." He then told reporters he and other Detroit owners would propose a rule change during the Gold Cup Committee's meeting at the Seattle Yacht Club the next day. They would ask that there be a limit to the number of consecutive Gold Cup races one city could stage. "We feel that two years in one city is plenty," he explained. "We had the Gold Cup in Detroit too long, and now we feel that Seattle has had it long enough."

The owners did vote on one issue during the following day's committee meeting. They had allowed a three and three-quarters miles long racecourse for the 1953 race, but there was a strong movement to return the length to three miles. The Detroit owners saw the longer course as an advantage for Sayres's boats. The vote was three to two in favor of the shorter course, and they'd take a poll of those who weren't there.

But as for Schafer's idea to limit the number of consecutive races a city could host? He didn't bring it up. But, he had a frank discussion with the group about a related issue—something that was important to him and to the other owners from the Motor City. ❖



**Three men, their fast boats,
and the passion they brought to Seattle**

ANDREW MUNTZ

Featuring the photography of Bob Carver

TWO MEN FROM SEATTLE had the same ambition. They wanted the fastest boat in the world.

One of them loved to play with design ideas that would make boats go faster. He had the idea. The other was a successful auto dealer who loved speed and was a boat racer. He had the money.

Then came a third—a man who had the mechanical genius to build things that worked. He applied the money and used the idea to build a race boat that not only set the world's straightaway speed record but also went to Detroit, easily won the Gold Cup—the biggest boat race in the world—and brought the prestigious event to Seattle.

Slo-mo-shun is the story of those three men: Ted Jones, Stan Sayres, and Anchor Jensen—men who stunned the world of unlimited hydroplane racing in 1950 and brought the world's fastest boats to the Pacific Northwest. Because of them, the sport became the biggest thing in town.

***Slo-mo-shun* is available now on Amazon.**

Remembering Clint Newman

April 5, 1942 - October 7, 2023

BY MIKE NOONAN

Clinton Harlin Newman II was a good friend and passionate fan and supporter of unlimited hydroplane racing. In 1969, he and a few college friends were looking for someplace to go on a weekend to do some drinking and have fun. They went to Madison, Indiana, where they spent race weekend on the Kentucky side. After the 1971 Gold Cup, he saw that all the fun and excitement was on the Indiana side and decided that was where he wanted to be. That led to a love of Hydros and Madison, where he attended the regatta for 52 consecutive years.

He held a block of rooms at the Clifty Inn for all those years where he introduced many family and friends to the sport. On Sunday of regatta weekend in 1974, he called the hospital back home to check on his pregnant wife, Linda, and learned she was close to delivering their first child. He told them to keep her another day. He made it there on Monday and she had their only child, Clinton III.

His most proud and memorable

moment was when he went from being just a fan to a participant at Owensboro in 1975. Bad weather on Sunday had forced postponement until Monday. The governor of Kentucky had been there on Sunday to present the Governor's Cup but had to return to Frankfort. Clint was the assistant secretary of state and was asked to stand in and present the trophy.

He amassed a huge collection of hydro memorabilia that filled a second garage. He held an annual hydro party at his farm in Versailles, Kentucky, where he entertained dozens of his neighbors, family, and friends. In 1983, he learned that the Unlimited Racing Commission's chief referee, me, lived only 10 miles from him. He called and introduced himself to my wife. He invited us to be their guest of honor, and the rest is history.

Clint was able to attend races around the country and wrote many articles on boat racing that were published nationally. He was a frequent contributor to and on the editorial board of the *Unlimited NewsJournal* and best known for his



in-depth interviews and East Coast race coverage.

He succumbed this past October 7 to complications of a head injury that he suffered in a fall at his home exactly two years earlier. ❖

50th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE:

A special letter to the editor: Tremayne Remains

FROM DAVID SPEER

How time flies. Last month the *Unlimited NewsJournal* recognized its 50th year. Believe me, no one involved with its birth and launch imagined or predicted this long life.

As indefatigable hydro enthusiast Bob Senior recently reminded me, I had conceived *UNJ* in idea, title, and as founding editor. Too long of a story to re-

count here. Simply, I had a manual typewriter and didn't want to dawdle through monthly Sunday club meetings without something to show for the social time. I essentially learned on the job, ultimately serving two three-year stints as hands-on editor.

A half century is a remarkable run for a monthly enthusiast newsletter. Cur-

rent editor Andy Muntz, in his column last month, was succinct in his conclusion that this success depended on teamwork built into *Unlimited NewsJournal* bones. Especially when historical accuracy was always the aim. The ambition was to become the sport's timely, comprehensive, and authoritative unofficial journal of record.

Fans became writers; collectors became archivists; typists became computer keyboardists; snapshot “Kodakers” bought longer lenses; amateur historians turned out professional work; and scads of interviews have been taped (some yet to be unearthed). With age comes nostalgia and its more serene companion, tradition. Frankly, there were struggles and structural problems, even a near death that someone termed a journalistic holocaust! Hanging in there demanded collective courage.

Reporting coast-to-coast races in return for a coveted pit pass was daunting. Dropping a name (which one must be careful about) just before his passing in ‘04, Ekay Muller admitted that it seemed as if half the past 40 years had been spent in Madison, Indiana, or thinking about this friendly racing town. That bridge was too damn narrow for photos of very fast boats. But I recall camera ace Frank Peirce Williams, ever resourceful, having his own traffic pylon to manage vehicles around him.

Whew!

The reality of so many large and small jobs to create a whole got me thinking about the many friends to acknowledge and thank for their commitment and time. These people know who they are, but how can we show appreciation?

So, while browsing through some old file folders, I stumbled upon the following 1993 letter from David Tremayne, a forever fan of speed who is internationally recognized as a Formula 1 and land-speed-record expert. As if by karma, his sympathetic painting of motorsport publishing and content of this humble epistle—in one way or another—honors the decades of required collective energy, willingness, and perseverance.

Dear David:

I've been meaning to write for some time. As executive editor of the British motor racing publications *Motoring News* (weekly) and *Motor Sport* (monthly), I have a fair appreciation of what goes into putting

words on pages and getting them to the readers. I'd like to congratulate you and your team on some superb work. You have consistently set a high standard in editorial, graphic and photographic presentation and to me the greatest index of any publication is quite simple: Does it tell you something you didn't know? In this respect I find it constantly exciting.

Imagine the scene: Get up at six, drive to work in London traffic for anything up to an hour. Start work at seven. Knock out 8,500-word supplement for *Motor Sport* on Jimmy Clark. Choose photographs for same. Scream at staff. Drink tea. Get screamed at by staff. Write up road impressions of Jaguar V12 that you've been putting off for a fortnight. Drink more tea. Punch laser printer when it packs up for umpteenth time. Write *Motoring News* Formula One preview for South African GP and marvel at the prospect of being ignored again by Ayrton Senna. Counterbalance that by remembering that Nigel Mansell is in America all year. Drink more tea. Argue with managing director. Supervise production of PPG IndyCar supplement. Deal with moaning punter who has somehow got through on the telephone. Drive home for another hour, snarling at other road users. Get blown off in Indianap-

olis 500 game by sons, eight and five years old. Retire hurt to catch up on day with wife. Discover latest *Unlimited NewsJournal* in post. Take tongue out of cheek. Ignore family for rest of evening and celebrate high point of day with said *Unlimited NewsJournal* and pondering the chances of relocating to Seattle to cover a sport peopled by genuine characters instead of egotistical F1 prima donnas.

Go without the *NewsJournal*? I'd sooner see Mansell win Indy. Keep up the good work and thanks for the enjoyment. Enclosed is my subscription for another two years' worth of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*. The idea of having to do without it is like trying to turn without a skid fin.

Those more curious about *UNJ* innards may seek out “15 Memorable Years” by Forest Brooks and Bob Senior in the February 1982 issue. Similarly, a 25-year appreciation was planned or published in 1998; off the cuff, I don't know for sure when—or even if. Which points to the need for a complete and detailed *Unlimited NewsJournal* software editorial index. Somebody begin work on that. ❖

H1 Unlimited undergoes a change of leadership.

The Board of Directors for H1 Unlimited, a non-profit corporation registered in the state of Washington that governs the sport of unlimited hydroplane racing, has seen a change in leadership that supports a profit-making company called Hydrotown Group, LLC.

Hydrotown Group is owned by Darrell Strong, the owner of the Strong Racing Team; Charlie Grooms, the owner's representative for the Miss Madison Racing Team; and two other partners. The organization had proposed to H1 that they assume responsibility for the sport's marketing and media efforts, but then also began negotiating agreements with the APBA, with the race sites, and even with some of H1's volunteers.

When it became clear that Hydrotown Group's intention was not just to do marketing but to do a complete take-over of the entire sport, the H1 board weighed its options and decided to repopulate the sport's leadership with people who are supportive of Hydrotown Group's efforts. We'll have more information about this change and what it means in next month's issue of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*.

HYDROFILE

Race Team News by Lon Erickson



Go3 Racing

There is always something going on with Ed Cooper's Go3 Racing team. Work at the Go3 Racing shop continues and maintenance of the Allison V-12s is in full swing. For the first time in four years, the Turbinator needs no repairs and is ready to go. But, with that said, Cooper (pictured at right) has officially put the boat, trailer, and hauler on the market FOR SALE. What does this mean for the Go3 Racing Team? All we can say at this point, is that it's still to be determined. But, if you are looking for a first-class unlimited hydroplane that has been maintained very well, now is your chance to go racing. For the price of \$575,000, you get the boat, trailer, and hauler. Included with the boat are the rear-wing assembly, front wing, steering, rudder, and skid fin. The trailer that carries the Turbinator is a beautiful, custom hydraulic-tilt trailer that was originally fabricated for the Miss Budweiser. The hauler is a Freightliner that is titled as an RV, with a Cummins Reman 400 Big Cam with 25,000 miles, generator, and air-conditioned front lounge. It also comes with Lista tool boxes, custom cabinets, and counters. And, underbody storage boxes. NOT included but available upon sale of the boat, trailer, and hauler, are a complete set of molds for all boat components; spare wings, uprights, and propellers; and Allison V-12 race engines. For more information, contact Ed at go3racing@gmail.com



Photos from Go3 Racing

Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

Vintage U-2 Miss U.S. 1 testing

A planned test of Miss U.S. 1 on the Detroit River on Monday, November 6 did not go off as planned. With Mark Weber behind the wheel, the boat was towed out onto the Detroit River racecourse from the Bayview Yacht Club, only to have 30 mph winds, and rough river conditions force the test session to be canceled. No word, yet, on if they'll make another attempt at running the iconic world-record holder U-2.



Photos by Debbie Schwartz Maciolek

U-27 Wiggins Racing

The last we saw the U-27 Wiggins Racing in late June, the image below is what the new hull looked like. Not much has changed in the months after, and it appears that's the way it will stay, at least for now. Owner Charley Wiggins reports, "The boat is primed, ready to paint and put together. We have everything in the shop to finish. However, due to various circumstances, we are on an indefinite hold." What's next for the new U-27? For right now, it's still to be determined. "My current stage of life along with various business commitments, I do not currently anticipate our further involvement in the sport." Charley also put his Grand Prix hydro, the GP-27, up for sale in September.



Chris Martin

HOLD THE DATE FOR THE ANNUAL H1 AWARDS BANQUET

The annual H1 meetings and awards banquet has been scheduled for Saturday, January 6, 2024, at the Angel of the Winds Resort and Casino in Arlington, Washington. Keep an eye on the H1 website or for postings on social media to get more details about blocks of rooms, meeting and banquet times, the menu, the cost, and the process for getting your reservations.

MY \$0.02 WORTH

Editorial Comment by Andy Muntz



Perhaps you have a Christmas gift problem. I know that my wife and children do. Each year at this time I get the same question: What do you want for Christmas? And, sadly, my answer seems always to be the same—a shrug of my shoulders.

I'm never sure what I want, and if there is something I want, I've probably already purchased it. Consequently, that doesn't leave much room for the gift purchasers in my life.

Maybe you've got the same issue? As hydroplane fans, we provide our families a particularly difficult challenge because there isn't a great deal of hydroplane stuff out there to be purchased. Consequently, there's a good chance you're also guilty of shrugging your shoulders when that inevitable question comes.

Well, shrug no more. I have a suggestion for you.

I've written a book. You might have seen something about it elsewhere in this publication. And, the book just came out, which means you can assure your spouse

or children that it's something you don't yet have.

When you get the book for Christmas, I hope you'll find the story interesting. It certainly was fun writing it.

When I started the project, I thought I knew pretty well the story of Stan Sayres, Ted Jones, Anchor Jensen, and how the beloved *Slo-mo* team brought unlimited hydroplane racing to the Pacific Northwest. I knew what happened during the 1951 Gold Cup, saw film of *Slo-mo V* doing the backflip in 1955, and was aware of the friction that existed between Jones and Jensen.

But, as I got deeper into the topic, I soon discovered that there was a great deal more going on behind the scenes.

Sayres became a reluctant celebrity, for example. At his core he was a shy man, yet was featured in the second issue of *Sports Illustrated* ever produced and one morning had a national TV show broadcast live from his beautiful home. He carried a heavy burden of expectations by the community and became a

classic example of the notion that there's often a price to pay for getting your dreams fulfilled.

Meanwhile, there were other stories. Sayres about blew a gasket he was so angry about the lack progress in building *Slo-mo V*. The transition to Rolls Merlin power was, shall we say, less than smooth. Did Sayres operate his race team as a business or was it a hobby? The IRS had one opinion, and Sayres had another. How big of a role did the community have in the operation of the *Slo-mo* team? Turns out, it was greater than you might think. And, what about those famous flying starts that so greatly irritated the challengers from Detroit?

I hope you'll add the book to your holiday wish list and that you'll be happy to receive it as a gift. And, what if nobody asks you what you want for Christmas? I guess you have no other choice but to buy it for yourself. ❖

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Letters are welcome, but may be edited for clarity and space.
Send comments to: ajmuntz@icloud.com

PLEASE JOIN US AT THE NEXT MEETING OF UNLIMITEDS UNANIMOUS

2 p.m. on Sunday, December 10, 2023

Renton Public Library, 100 Mill Ave. S., Everett, WA 98057