

UNLIMITED NewsJournal

A CHRONICLE OF SPEED

DECEMBER 2022

A look back at 2022.



When historians look back at the 2022 H1 Unlimited Racing Series, they will likely see it as a season where not a great deal was different, but where significant changes occurred. Jimmy Shane and *Miss HomeStreet* won the national championship in convincing fashion, a title that team has earned 11 times in the past 14 years.

Yet, it also was a season that introduced a new race format that promises to add some excitement to race weekends.

Vancouver

It all got underway on a blustery Friday in late May when four hydroplanes appeared on the shore of the Columbia River near Vancouver, Wash., for an opportunity to get the boats in the

water and make some test runs. It was also a test for the city itself, which is located across the river from Portland, Oregon, and has expressed a desire to hold an H1 Unlimited event one day.

While it was hard to judge the size of the crowd that had gathered along a narrow trail that lined the north shore of the river, the promoters from the tourist bureau seemed happy with the result—once

ALSO IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

9 The Baker's Fifth
13 GoPros, drones, and more

19 The 2022 Season Summary
20 HydroFile by Lon Erickson

23 Comments from H1 by Jan Shaw

Lon Erickson



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow



TOP: The exhibition at Vancouver started with a display of the boats near the city's downtown.

MIDDLE: The pit area on the shore of the Columbia River in Vancouver.

ABOVE: Dave Villwock and *Miss Beacon Plumbing* during a test run at Vancouver.

the action got underway. After a delay in setting the course that tested the patience of some fans, Jeff Bernard kicked off the 2022 season with a three-lap run in the U-91 *Miss Goodman Real Estate*.

Dave Villwock was next in a U-40 *Miss Beacon Plumbing* that featured some obvious aerodynamic changes made during the winter. He turned in the day's fastest lap of 154 mph. Also on the course for a short run was the defending driver's champion J. Michael Kelly aboard the U-8 *Miss Tri-Cities*, which circled the course twice and then went dead as a cloud of smoke swirled from its exhaust die to an oil-line failure. Jamie Nilsen in the U-11, which was called May Awning and Patio for the event, also took several laps around the course.

Tri-Cities Test

Two weeks later and 230 miles upstream on the Columbia River another set of unlimited hydros gathered in the Tri-Cities for another testing opportunity. This time the defending champion U-1 *Miss HomeStreet*, the U-9 *Pinnacle Peak Consulting*, and the U-21 *Lakeridge Paving* joined *Miss Tri-Cities* and *Miss Beacon Plumbing* for the chance to get some test runs in the books.

In a preview of things to come, Shane turned in the day's fastest lap with a run of about 166 mph. The boat showed excellent acceleration and was riding perfectly, but there was a flaw in its otherwise spectacular performance. The engine simply stopped running during one session, but Shane got it restarted and got it back to the pits.

Kelly was able to get more laps done in *Miss Tri-Cities* than he had in Vancouver, but it was still lacking some of its customary speed and had handling issues. His teammate, however, Corey Peabody in *Pinnacle Peak Consulting*, had no such issues and turned in a lap of just under 160 mph. Villwock was also on the course several times and had a fastest lap of 164 mph.



Lon Erickson



Chris Denslow

ABOVE: The U-8 *Miss Tri-Cities* and, behind it, the U-9 *Pinnacle Peak Consulting* wait at the dock in the Tri-Cities while *Miss Beacon Plumbing* is on the hoist.
LEFT: The U-21 *Lakeridge Paving* during its test run on the Columbia River.

Perhaps getting the most fan interest at the event was *Lakeridge Paving*, which was impressive during its second time out with Brian Perkins driving. Its best lap was 159 mph. Gunner O'Farrell, the grandson of owner Greg O'Farrell, also took the boat around the course several times and turned in a lap of a respectable 148 mph.

Guntersville

Shane and Villwock were the two favorites to win when the competition started counting for real at the season opener in Guntersville, Alabama. And, things got going with the biggest prize of them all—the APBA Gold Cup, the oldest trophy in American motorsports. Qualifying for the event was suspended in favor of giving the teams as much time as possible on the course with their race setups.

Shane again clearly showed that his *Miss HomeStreet* was the fastest in the field of seven entries when the racing got underway on Saturday. He won both of his preliminary heats while Villwock also was a winner in one heat—setting a course and Gold Cup competition lap record in the process. But he had jumped the gun in the other to give that heat to Bernard.

On Sunday, Shane and Villwock both won their two preliminary heats, which setup a confrontation in the winner-take-all final that was greatly anticipated by the race fans. But, unfortunately, the race ended up being over before it had a chance to start.

Villwock found himself far out of position as the boats were setting up for the starting line—so much, in fact, that in trying to scrub time he zigzagged back and forth so much that he went

Chris Denslow



outside the course boundary and was disqualified. Meanwhile, Shane ran into the same problem that had cropped up while testing in the Tri-Cities—the engine suddenly stalled, and the boat went dead. That resulted in a violation of the rule that requires the boats to maintain a minimum speed of 80 mph before the start.

While all of those watching suspected that an 80-mph-rule disqualification was coming for *Miss HomeStreet*, that couldn't be confirmed until the race was completed and the onboard data recorder could be checked. As a result, Shane ran ahead of all the others through the entire heat. Once the violation was confirmed, though, the Gold Cup victory instead went to Corey Peabody and the U-9 *Lynx Healthcare*, who had been the second boat across the finish line. Bernard took second-place honors and Jamie Nilsen in the U-11 *Miss Colleen* was third.

"As most of you know, my father, Allen Peabody, passed away on June 3," Peabody said to the crowd as he received the trophy. "I wanted to win this race for him. It is because of him that I am here today. I carried his hard card with me, so a part of him would be with me today. I can't begin to tell you how I am feeling right now."

Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow



TOP: Jimmy King and the Allison-powered *Griggs* presents *Miss Ace Hardware* races beside Jimmy Shane in *Miss HomeStreet* at Lake Gunterville. **MIDDLE:** Corey Peabody shows the audience at the awards ceremony his father's pit pass, which he carried with him as he won the Gold Cup. **ABOVE:** From the left, U-9 *Lynx Healthcare*, U-40 *Miss Beacon Plumbing*, and U-8 *Miss Tri-Cities*.

Madison

Six of the seven boats that had been at the Gold Cup showed up on the banks of the Ohio River at Madison, Indiana, the following weekend. Jimmy King and the U-3 *Griggs presents Miss Ace Hardware* instead elected to stay home. The field was then reduced to five on the first day of testing when Villwock and *Miss Beacon Plumbing* hit a log in the river and was damaged enough that it had to be hauled back to the shop near Snohomish, Wash., for repairs.

Saturday featured the debut of the new race format, which included two-lap match races, a last-chance heat, and a final to provide race fans with something different during the weekend. The seedings in the match races were determined by qualifying speed, with the slower of the two starting at the inside lane.

Peabody in *Lynx Healthcare* defeated Bernard in the first match race while Shane finished ahead of Kelly in the other. Kelly then led from start to finish in the last-chance heat. In the final, Shane took the lead at the start and held that position to the end, but when the boat's data recorder was checked after the contest, it was found to have dropped below the minimum speed before the start and was disqualified. Peabody was then declared the winner.

On Sunday, Peabody battled Shane early in the first heat until Shane pulled away and crossed the finish line ahead by the length of a roostertail, then it was Nilsen in *Miss Colleen* who put together a good fight against Shane in the second heat, until Shane again pulled away. With Shane sitting out the third preliminary, Peabody won easily. That set up another highly anticipated clash for the final.

Shane had the inside lane on Peabody through the first four laps of the final. The two were never more four boat lengths apart. As the pair crossed the finish line to start the last lap and headed into the first turn, the nose of *Lynx Healthcare* suddenly began to dance higher off



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow



Vicki Fewell

TOP: The hydro fleet on the Ohio River at Madison. From the left, Corey Peabody in U-9 *Lynx Healthcare*, J. Michael Kelly in U-8 *Miss Tri-Cities*, Jimmy Shane in U-1 *Miss HomeStreet*, and Jeff Bernard in *Miss Goodman Real Estate*. **MIDDLE:** *Lynx Healthcare* flying down the front stretch during the Indiana Governor's Cup. **ABOVE:** The U-9 *Lynx Healthcare* lands after its flip during the final heat.



Chris Denslow

ABOVE: Jimmy Shane and *Miss HomeStreet* (left) racing beside his teammate on the Madison Racing Team, Jeff Bernard in U-91 *Miss Goodman Real Estate*, during the HAPO Columbia Cup at the Tri-Cities.
RIGHT: The U-11 *Joker's Casino* heads out onto the Columbia River.



Chris Denslow

the water, then the boat climbed into the air, did two complete somersaults in midair, and crashed back into the water. The hydroplane landed right-side up but was severely damaged. Peabody was immediately taken to the medical facility at the racecourse, checked, and released without injury.

The race was stopped as soon as the accident happened and, with three laps completed by all boats, the officials declared the race finished. Shane was named the winner of the Indiana Governor's Cup, Bernard was second, and Nilsen was third.

Tri-Cities

Extrême heat greeted the race teams when they returned to the desert climate of the Tri-Cities in late July. The forecast predicted temperatures above 110 degrees for each day of the weekend. Shane was also blazing on the racecourse, turning in a qualifying run of over 164 mph, the fastest recorded on the racecourse since fuel-flow restrictions were introduced more than 25 years ago.

Villwock, with his freshly repaired *Miss Beacon Plumbing*, was nearly as fast as Shane with a qualifying run at over 163 mph, but after finishing second in his first heat, his bright orange boat suddenly went airborne at the start of the second heat, flipped in midair, and crashed into the Columbia River. Villwock climbed out of the cockpit unhurt, but another dash back to the team shop was in store for their boat and crew.

Also eliminated from the race on Saturday was the U-3 *Griggs presents Miss Ace Hardware*, a fan favorite with its turbocharged-Allison engine. During a test run earlier in the day, the boat lost a propeller blade as it crossed the start/finish line, causing enough damage to put it on the trailer for the weekend.

As for the race, it was all Shane and *Miss HomeStreet*. He won everything there was to win, including a wire-to-wire victory in the final heat that gave him the HAPO Columbia Cup. Kelly took second place in the boat he had been driving earlier in the season, but which had been re-named U-9 *Lynx Healthcare presents Miss Tri-Cities*

to replace the boat that flipped and was damaged in Madison. Jamie Nilsen was third in the U-11 *Miss Joker's Casino*.

Seattle

After two years away because of the Covid pandemic, the largest media market on the H1 Unlimited Racing Series schedule was finally back in 2022. What's more, although just five unlimiteds were parked in Seattle's Stan Sayres Pits, the event attracted a good crowd of spectators and the final heat was broadcast live on local television.

Like before, Shane was the fastest qualifier at over 153 mph while Villwock, driving the newly re-repaired *Beacon Plumbing* was second at 151 mph around the Lake Washington racecourse. The season's second match-race event was then held on Saturday. In the first duel, Kelly, his boat now renamed *Boitano Homes*, outfought Nilsen in the U-11 *Miss The Old Cannery Furniture Warehouse*, Shane entertained the fans with a narrow victory over Bernard, then Villwock outpaced Kelly. In the final, Shane took the lead at the start, pulled ahead during the first lap, and was never challenged.

Both Shane and Villwock jumped the gun in Sunday's first preliminary heat, which gave the win to Kelly. In the second, Shane finished with a narrow margin over his teammate, Bernard. In the final, Villwock apparently again found himself far out of place before the start because, despite slowing to a crawl to avoid crossing the starting line too early, he did it anyway by a wide margin. Then, to add insult, the data recorder also found him guilty of going too slow and he was later disqualified.

Meanwhile, Shane also cut the start too close and the bow of *Miss HomeStreet* was just a few feet across when the clock hit zero. He took an early lead in the race, but when he was notified that he had jumped the gun and was penalized an additional lap, he pulled his boat far to the outside and let Kelly pass. Kel-



Chris Denslow



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TOP: Kelly and the U-9 *Boitano Homes* (Left) side by side with Jamie Nilsen in the U-11 *Miss The Old Cannery Furniture Warehouse* on Lake Washington in Seattle. **MIDDLE:** *Miss Goodman Real Estate* leaves the Stan Sayres Pits. **ABOVE:** *Miss HomeStreet* and *Boitano Homes*.

ly then went on to an easy HomeStreet Bank Cup victory over Bernard in *Miss Goodman Real Estate*. Even despite his extra lap, Shane finished in third place.

San Diego

The final stop on the 2022 schedule came in mid-September amid the white-sand beaches and palm trees of San Diego. As the action got underway, Shane enjoyed a significant lead in points for the national driver's title, but the race for the team title was much closer—only 765 points ahead of the U-9 *Miss Tri-Cities*. Yet, Shane would have no trouble claiming both during a perfect weekend.

His successful stop at Mission Bay began with a qualifying run of over 165.6 mph, the fastest on the San Diego course since fuel restrictions were put in place. Then, during the match race event on Saturday, he won both his preliminary event at the final to win the first-place trophy. In doing that, he also clinched his seventh driver's title, a feat that ties him with Bill Muncey and Chip Hanauer for the second most in the sport's history.

Shane's initial match-race victory that day came against Dustin Echols, who had taken over the controls of *Miss Beacon Plumbing* from Dave Villwock. With two incidents that had severely damaged their boat, not to mention the many rule infractions that had taken them out of the running too many times, team owners Sharon and Kelly Stocklin decided it was time to give Echols an opportunity to drive the boat. But, just after crossing the starting line in the last-chance heat, the boat threw a prop blade and was damaged for a third time to the point that it couldn't race on Sunday.

There were no such problems in the *Miss HomeStreet* camp, though. Shane came from behind to beat Kelly in Sunday's first heat, then raced side-by-side with Bernard in the second heat before pulling away to a comfortable advantage at the finish line. The final featured close competition between Shane, Kelly, and



Chris Denslow



Chris Denslow

TOP: Madison Racing teammates *Miss HomeStreet* and *Miss Goodman Real Estate* on Mission Bay in San Diego. **ABOVE:** Jimmy Shane and his boys at the awards ceremony.

Bernard early in the race, until Shane pulled ahead and won the HomeStreet Bank Bayfair event easily.

The victory was the 25th in Jimmy Shane's career, a number that ties him with Dean Chenoweth as the fourth best in unlimited history. And, that's how his career would end. Rumors of his impending retirement were rampant in the San Diego pits, and they were confirmed less than a month later when Shane announced he was no longer going to drive.

So, with that, the 2022 season was done. The race teams packed up their

gear and hauled their boats home. Some have significant repairs to make during the winter, while others will be making modifications to find more speed. Meanwhile, new faces will appear in some cockpits, new names will appear on the decks of some boats, some of the hydros that sat out the season will hopefully return to action, and maybe there will be more places to race. These are the stories that will unfold in the months ahead until the H1 Unlimited hydros return to the water again in 2023. ❖

FROM THE UNJ VAULT: **THE BAKER'S FIFTH**

The following story first appeared
in the March 1976 issue of the *Unlimited NewsJournal*



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

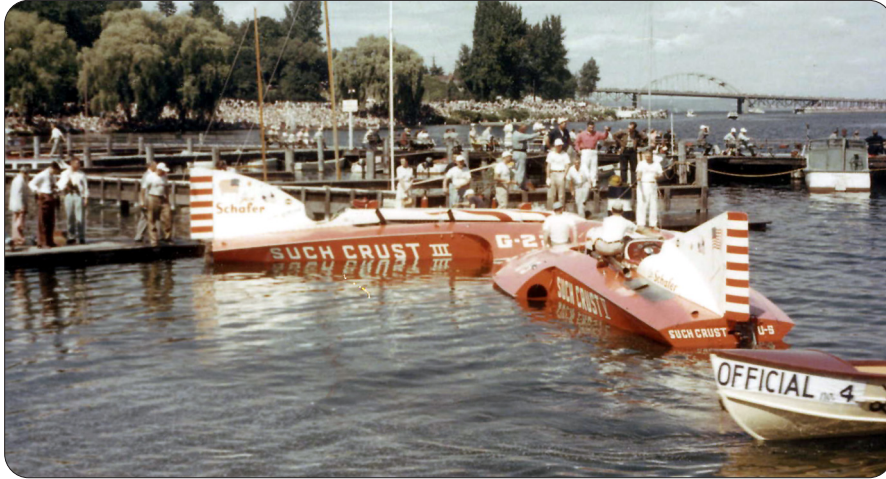
BY CRAIG FJARLIE

There is always a certain thrill surrounding the unexpected rediscovery of a relic from the past. Consider, then, the sensations felt among a group of Seattle's most ardent hydroplane fans who stumbled upon *Miss Mission Bay* in San Diego two years ago.

To the practiced eye, the boat's past was obvious. To the less informed, it represented a foggy history. From either point of view, *Miss Mission Bay* symbolizes

a period when the sportsman was King, the driver a folk hero, and the boat a concrete extension of a dream.

Les Staudacher constructed *Such Crust V*, U-5, in 1953 in fulfillment of an order from Detroit baker Jack Schafer. The boat was built as a replacement for the G-7 *Such Crust IV* that was heavily damaged by fire the previous season. Staudacher also produced the twin-Allison G-22 *Such Crust III* that year. Bill Cantrell, chosen to drive the *V*, aided in its construction.



Such Crust V (right) with its teammate *Such Crust III* at Seattle's Gold Cup in 1953.

"The boat was 30 feet long, with a 78-inch tunnel," Cantrell recalls. "It weighed 6,800 pounds, ready to race."

When construction was complete, Schafer gave the *Crust V* to his wife, Liz, as an anniversary present. She became the registered owner and her name graced the tail fin. "My mother never liked the boats," said Jack Schafer, Jr. "So, my father gave it to her hoping it would smooth over some family difficulties."

In contrast to current practice, rudders on boats of that era were fastened to the right side of the transom. "That was the place for all of them because the *Slo-mos* were on the right," Cantrell explained. "It wasn't until the following year, when I was with W.D. Gale, that we began to experiment with the rudder on the left."

Equipped with a stock Allison, *Such Crust V* provided Cantrell satisfactory performance. "It handled beautifully. It was a good rough-water boat."

The red and white *Such Crust V* made its competitive debut at the 1953 Detroit Memorial. Only three other boats qualified: sister ship *Such Crust III* with Chuck Thompson driving, *Gale II* with Lee Schoenith, and *Miss Great Lakes II* with Danny Foster occupying the cockpit. Only Foster and Cantrell were around for the final heat, but the two veteran drivers gave the crowd an exciting show, crossing the finish line five feet apart.

Foster was the winner after a perfect day of racing, and Cantrell was second.

Next, *Such Crust V* appeared in Seattle for the Gold Cup. It was the boat's only Northwest appearance. Cantrell finished a consistent third in the first heat, but was pursued by bad luck the rest of the day. The prop was lost in the second heat and, running on a borrowed wheel in the final, Cantrell was sidelined by mechanical woes. The tough breaks hardly received sympathy from the partisan Seattle crowd as *Slo-mo-shun IV* won the Cup with three straight heat victories.

The second half of the '53 season was spiced with a journey east by *Slo-mo-*

shun V. Lou Fageol won the first of five Silver Cup heats, but with Joe Taggart in the cockpit for the second go-round, the story changed. Danny Foster won the heat in *Gale II* and Cantrell's *Such Crust V* nosed out *Slo-mo* by three lengths for second. Neither of the latter two would score in subsequent heats. *Gale II* went on to win, *Such Crust V* fifth, and *Slo-mo-shun V* fourth.

In the President's Cup, nine entries answered the starter's gun. *Slo-mo-shun V* was the day's hero, winning two heats and taking second in the final to *Such Crust III*. Cantrell hung on for third with *Crust V*.

The following weekend at New Martinsville, West Virginia, *Such Crust* finally proved its worth. Two heats of four laps each around the three-mile course were scheduled. Cantrell won them both. *Gale II* placed second overall, followed by *Miss Wayne*. *Slo-mo V* fizzled on the first lap. A similar fate befell *Such Crust II*. *It's A Wonder* never started. In mile trials that same weekend, Cantrell hustled his mount through the traps at 140.18 mph, while *Such Crust III* recorded 151.58 mph.

For Jack Schafer, 1954 brought economic hardships and he was forced to file bankruptcy. As a result, both unlimiteds were placed under federal receivership.



Bill Cantrell on the deck of *Such Crust V* at Seattle's Mount Baker pits area at the 1953 Gold Cup.

Fred Van Lennep, a Detroit-area harness racer, leased the two *Crusts* for the Silver Cup.

Consistent with his first love, Van Lennep renamed the *V*, *Trot-Along* and the *III*, *Pace-Along*. Roy Duby was tabbed to steer *Trot-Along*, while Chuck Thompson retained his seat in the *G-22*. During time trials, Thompson's mount sank, leaving only Duby's charger in competitive shape. (Not to be left on the beach, Thompson got his own *Short Circuit* into the race.)

Duby had a fair day, winning the second heat, although being swamped by roostertails in the third. Now, remembering his fourth-place finish, Duby's thoughts centered on a near-tragic incident involving a spectator. Races in the early '50s were started on the Belle Isle side of the Detroit River, making the sharp upriver turn—now known as the Roostertail Turn—the first. Additionally, since heat sections were not instituted until '55, all qualified boats ran at the same time.

"We were coming down for the start, heading into the first turn," says Duby, and here was this spectator in an outboard floating loose down the buoy line. He had broken away from his mooring. Race boats went everywhere. I think I went inside the buoys trying to miss him. Race boats went everywhere. I think I went inside the buoys trying to miss him. I still recall the fellow's eyes. They looked like two sealed-beam headlights! Somehow, we all missed him."

Van Lennep had his fill of boat racing. He had borrowed the *Crusts* under a \$15,000 bond that guaranteed their return in good condition. When *Pace-Along* sank, the agreement was violated to the extent required for salvage. When the Silver Cup was over, Van Lennep went back to the horses.

Schafer recovered financially during the winter and was able to continue his racing activities in '55. "My dad always loved the twin-engine set-up," said Jack Schafer, Jr. "Ever since he first saw the twin-Allison *Miss Pepsi* he wanted the same thing." It was no real surprise, then,

that Schafer let the *Such Crust V* go, choosing to center his attention on the *III*.

Bill Stroh of Detroit bought the *V* and took it to the Detroit Memorial with its original name still intact. Stroh's initial entry into the roostertail game was a disappointment, as his craft could not qualify. The next appearance would be two months later at the Silver Cup.

Fred Alter tested the renamed *Miss Detroit*, but was passed over for race day. Stroh flew in Ray Crawford, favoring the latter's experience over rookie Alter. Experience notwithstanding, Crawford jumped the gun in Heat 1B. Displeased, Stroh gave Alter the seat for the second elimination.

Leading through the first turn, Alter drove hard up the backstretch, but young Bill Muncy charged harder in the new

Miss Thriftway and took over the lead. Alter hung on for second. Overall, *Miss Detroit* scored ninth. *Tempo VII* took home the Silver Cup.

"East vs. West" was the issue in the '50s. It was unusual, then, when the announcement was made in 1956 that Bill Stroh was selling *Miss Detroit* to J. Philip Murphy of Oakland, California.

Murphy was a veteran of Lake Tahoe racing, and had been involved with unlimiteds since 1954, and with limiteds prior to that. His U-22 *Breathless* was a family venture—sons Jay and Roger driving.

Danny Foster and Les Staudacher helped prepare the former *Miss Detroit* for Murphy. The craft had not been in the water since the '55 Silver Cup so a great deal of work was required. "There was nothing in the boat," recalled Fos-



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum



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TOP: The former *Such Crust V* appeared as *Trot-Along* in 1954.
ABOVE: In 1955, the boat saw action as *Miss Detroit*.

ter, “no shaft, shaft log, instruments, fuel or oil tanks. About all Staudacher and I did was lay out the parts. Murphy sent a man out to get the work done. He was a big man, about six-foot-four. They called him Slim. I never saw a man do so much work in such a short time., He put everything in the boat and aligned it all in two days.”

Such Crust V got another name and number: U-30 *Muvalong*. Jay Murphy drove in the first three appearances of the year. In the Gold Cup at Detroit, *Muvalong* was holding down fifth in Heat 1B when heavy rain forced officials to stop the race. Unable to fire up for the restart, *Muvalong* was replaced by *Hawaii Kai III* and did not appear again during the course of the day.

At the President’s Cup two weeks later, *Muvalong* netted 12th. Immediately after, four boats ventured forth to vie for the Rogers Memorial, a two-heat affair. *Hawaii Kai III* won both heats to take the trophy. *Muvalong* finished fourth behind *Miss U.S. I* and *Shanty I*.

Roger Murphy took over the wheel for the Sahara Cup at Lake Mead. Heading down the backstretch during Heat 1A, a hole was punctured through *Muvalong’s* sponson. “The boat ran wet sponsons, so it was no serious problem,” said Roger. “I got it back to the pits before it sank.”

“We had damaged one sponson in Washington, which we repaired, and then damaged the other at Lake Mead,” added Jay.

Muvalong did not re-enter competition until 1958 when it appeared at the Lake Tahoe Mile High Trophy Race. “Red Loomis was a family friend and had driven limiteds for us,” Jay Murphy recalled. “I suppose that’s why my father asked him to drive.” The association did not last long as *Muvalong* was again sidelined by damage in its first heat. “It seemed like every time we ran the boat, something happened to it,” Jay said.

Although more than one source listed *Muvalong* as being for sale during the



Sandy Ross Collection



Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum

TOP: The boat was sold to J. Philip Murphy and appeared as *Muvalong* from 1956 to '58.
ABOVE: The boat’s last action came on Lake Tahoe in 1962 with the name *Hurricane VI*.

mid-‘50s, both Murphy brothers denied any attempt to sell the craft. “We never had a boat for sale,” Jay emphasized.

“*Breathless II* was a better boat, so we concentrated on it,” explained Roger, when asked why *Muvalong* never again appeared until 1962 (two years after the Murphys had retired from racing) when Morlan Visel arranged to enter the boat in the first Harrah’s Trophy Race on Lake Tahoe.

“My father didn’t want to be responsible for liability when Visel ran the boat,” said Roger, “so he told Morlan, “You buy it from me for a dollar, and after the race sell it back for a dollar.”

With the boat renamed *Hurricane VI*, Visel drove to a solid third place, winning Heat 1A. It was the last competitive appearance of the Baker’s Fifth, *Such Crust V*.

Two years later, Ray Fageol contact-

ed J. Philip Murphy on behalf of the San Diego Race committee, which wanted the veteran hull for promoting Mission Bay’s inaugural Unlimited race. The Murphys never saw their boat again. “We were out of racing by then. I don’t think we really wanted it back,” said Roger Murphy.

The craft ended up atop Sunset Garage at Ocean Beach, remaining there until just prior to the 1974 San Diego Regatta, when the committee retrieved the hull for display. The local press mistakenly identified it as the former second *Gale V*, but knowledgeable fans knew otherwise. The hull was painted red, white and blue, and, through some stroke of fate, the original U-5 number was also returned to the deck. As *Miss Mission Bay*, the old *Such Crust V* then spent its last days as a reminder to historically oriented spectators of a previous era. ❖

GoPros, drones, and so much more

BY BILL OSBORNE

You see them at every H1 Unlimited race. There's Walt Ottenad, running down onto the docks, installing, and setting GoPro cameras on each boat, recording every test run, qualification, and heat race.

In the beginning, "I only had one GoPro for each boat," he says. "I mounted the camera on the rear wing, turned it on and let the cameras record. Over time, we obtained more cameras. Today, we record each run from multiple locations on boats—up to six cameras per boat."

As the quality of the GoPro cameras improved, some of the footage produced spectacular results. Walt's videos included fiery starts, engine explosions, flips, collisions, and crashes. One of the neatest videos he did was a multi-view from the *Miss Tri-Cities*. Walt synced video of the views from the cowling, snorkel, rear wing, and J. Michael Kelly's left foot controlling the canard. That video gave viewers an idea of what it takes to operate the front wing under race conditions.

At Madison, Walt's videos captured Corey Peabody's flip from multiple vantage points. Unfortunately, three GoPros ended up at the bottom of the Ohio River on that one. The most recent masterpiece was the propeller blade video from San Diego. There, Walt's camera captured the blade from *Miss Beacon Plumbing* flying off the boat.

Meanwhile, Lisa Courneya is flying drones from various locations on the racecourse. The drone videos are so good that H1 is now using her footage in place of manned helicopters that used to fly H1 referees over the racecourse to officiate at \$1,500 an hour.

With good reason, Lisa is proud of her work. "It took a lot of time and effort to become a qualified, CFR 14 Part 107–licensed drone pilot and to understand the responsibilities. The pictures and video we are getting look good and have helped H1 improve officiating. Each year, we are getting better."



Craig Barney

Walt and Lisa are married to each other, and the following is an interview I conducted with them this summer at Tri Cities:

Walt began with some background on what got him hooked on motorsports. "In 1966, I watched the movie *Grand Prix* starring James Garner at the Cinerama Theater in Seattle. I was that seven-year-old kid sitting next to my father, getting turned on about racing. I even made my father buy the soundtrack of the movie, and side two of the record had the sounds of the engines, and I wore out those grooves! Living in Seattle, hydroplane racing was huge. Sneaking into the pits in 1968 to see my idol Billy Schumacher and ending up as a



Bill Osborne

part of his team blew me away.” Walt was hooked forever.

To give an idea of how fanatical Walt was about Unlimited hydroplanes, he built his own “Miss Bugweiser,” a VW Bug body on floats that he painted like the real *Miss Budweiser*, and with a

25-horsepower motor, joined the circus that was the log boom in Seattle in the mid-’80s. “In 1987, we even got a photo of Jim Kropfeld standing on the “Miss Bugweiser” after his win in Seattle. That was the highlight of my pre-H1 hydro experience.”

Walt’s and Lisa’s journey as a husband-and-wife team took different paths. My ex-wife checked out of motherhood,” Walt explained, “leaving me as a single parent of four, five, and seven-year-old boys for almost 10 years. More than anything else, that taught me to learn time management. Our lives were school and sports. I was on the board of the baseball league, president of the Federal Way Hawks football club, then commissioner of the football league.

“After the practices ended, I gathered my boys and their gear, readied them to go home. All too often, I had to wait for parents who were late picking up their kids. There were times that I drove kids home. Many nights, my boys ate dinner after 10 p.m. and, while the boys ate, I washed their clothes for the next day’s practice.”

Walt and Lisa met in 2000 when her son played football and her three girls did cheerleading in the same football league. Lisa was the VP of the Auburn Panthers



Dan Foard



Craig Barney

football club for 11 years and a single parent, as well. They joined families in 2002, leading to a VERY full house (seven kids between them). All of the kids continued in school and select sports (tennis, football, baseball, and softball) until they all graduated high school.

“As an amateur photographer and a motor-sport fanatic, I was hoping to combine my passions,” Walt continued. “In 2003, I learned about an Indy car test at Portland Raceway. There I met Bob Pengraph who became a good friend. We started a group called NW Speedshots that included some very talented photographers: Chris Denslow, Mark Sharley, and Jeffery Dahl, among them, which eventually gained us access to different events.

“And because of my business, I was able to write off a lot of the expenses I incurred. We went to the Indianapolis 500 three years in a row. We also did the Champ Car races in Portland every year. One of the other things we did was get involved with Unlimited Lights with Wil Muncey and Pat Malara, taking photographs at the various events and contributing with editor Mark Sharley to their magazine *Thunder and Lights*. One of the cooler things we did was to install a Chase Cam (an onboard recorder that was cabled to a lip-stick camera) onto various UL hydros which was semi-groundbreaking at the time.

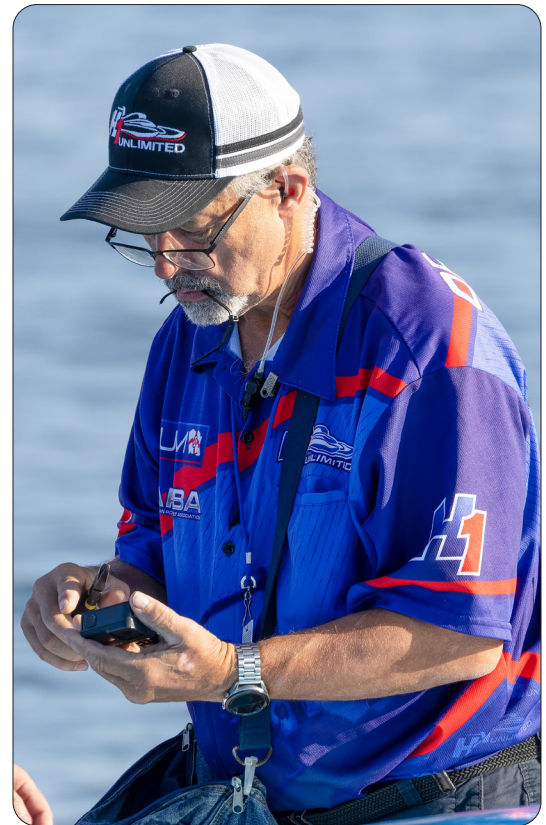
“In 2007, I mounted the Chase Cam on the tail of the vintage *Miss Burien* at a test session, then Cowboy Bob Jensen had me bring this it down to

What put the onboard video program solidly on the map was the unfortunate accident that occurred when J.W. Myers lost the skid fin on the U-37 in Detroit in 2010, which sent him headfirst into the seawall at the Roostertail Turn in Detroit. Walt’s GoPros captured that collision from three different angles and didn’t miss a beat, showing the collision in excruciating detail.

the U-13 shop to show it off. The next year (2008) I was invited to join the U-13 team, owned by Dave Bartush. J. Michael Kelly was the driver and Curt Taverner was crew chief. I went to every race that year.”

During that time, Lisa was hanging out with Vince Xaudaro, Joe Souza, and Tim Van Hollenbeck of the 929 Unlimited Light team. “Tim recruited me on to the team,” she said. “When the ULs changed to the GPs, I joined Walt, (who had by then joined his childhood idol Billy Schumacher’s U-37 team) on the U-37 and worked with him taking photographs with Northwest Speedshots.”

What put the onboard video program solidly on the map was the unfortunate accident that occurred when J.W. Myers lost the skid fin on the U-37 in Detroit in 2010, which sent him headfirst into the seawall at the Roostertail Turn in Detroit. Walt’s GoPros captured that collision from three different angles and didn’t miss a beat, showing the collision in excruciating detail. That eventually prompted H1 Chairman Sam Cole to invite Walt to join H1 Unlimited to implement the GoPro program into the series. Steve Montgomery facilitated a partnership with GoPro, who have contributed tens of thousands of dollars’ worth of cameras and accessories over the years and have



Chris Denslow

basically changed the face of the sport in the process.

“At the race sites, I do the GoPros,” Walt says. “I put them on the boats, take them off the boats, and do all the care and feeding of the GoPros. I make certain the mounts are securely adhered to the boats. I don’t think most people realize how brutal these boats are on the GoPros. After working on crews in various capacities for the last 15 years, I am amazed at how they can find new ways of breaking equipment.

“You can’t just put a GoPro on a boat and expect it to come back. It doesn’t work that way. I’ve had to become creative on how I mount them and where they go. A lot of it is anticipating where the boat is going to be and what view I going to need to get from a particular boat in a given heat. For example, if I am working on J. Michael Kelly’s boat, I know that he is going to do anything he can to obtain lane one. With that in mind, I set his cameras up to get the best view possible.”

The most-obvious problem is keeping the GoPro on a boat that is traveling at almost 200 miles per hour. “After a lot of research, I found that VHB tape



Chris Denslow

works perfectly for this purpose,” he says. “That’s the most amazing thing on the planet. The best example of how great this tape is took place at Doha when Tom Thompson went over the top of Brian Perkins. The boat hit so hard that it broke the motor mounts and pitched the engine to the bottom of Doha Bay and snapped off the right sponson intact, but my camera came back. Someone walked by the pile of garbage that used to be the U-11, spotted my camera still attached, and returned it to me in the pits.”

After downloading the footage, Walt edits and uploads the clips to YouTube. “At this time, we have uploaded almost 4,000 videos to our YouTube channel. Fans can use the H1 app and view any of the videos we have posted in the last 10 years. We primarily use the videos for promotion of the sport. We also use videos to help teams improve their performance. If any crew chief wants us to place a camera in a specific place on the boat, we are always willing to help.

“One example I remember occurred on the U-37 when J.W. Myers was driving. Their concern was their engine was getting salted down. The videos we produced earlier showed that water was not

entering through the cowling intake, so I mounted a camera in the bilge. Sure enough, it showed the zerk fitting at the top of the shaft log was sending pressurized water out of the fitting right into the intake of the engine. Problem solved!”

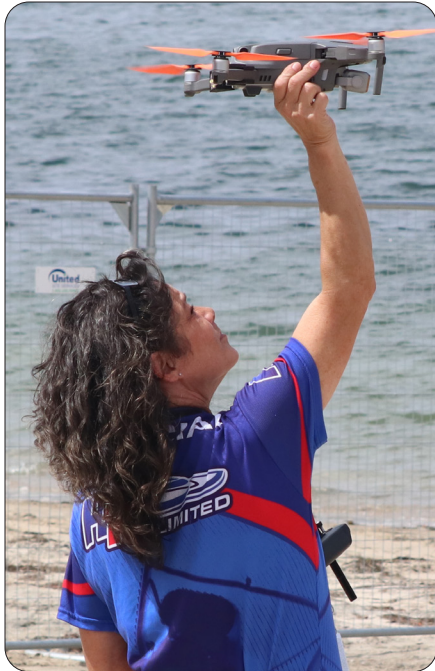
Lisa loves to tell the story of her first experience in auto racing. “Walt took me to my first Champ Car race in 2007. I had no idea about Champ Car racing. While we were walking through the pits, I met the senior mechanic of the Newman-Haus Racing Team. I asked him questions about the car. He opened the gate and allowed me to walk through, closing the gate in front of Walt. [She laughs.] He gave me a tour of the garage, car hauler and the car.

“We became good friends. Walt and I attended many of the races. Through our friendship, he asked me to be the team photographer for a few of the races, until Champ Car folded. I occasionally hear Walt tell the story that he has been a race fanatic all his life, then takes me to my first race and I got the full-on tour and got to sit in a Champ Car for pit stop practices.

“This eventually led to photographing the Unlimited Hydroplane events. I



Lon Erickson



Lon Erickson

later began helping Steve Montgomery with the presentation of year-end galas, using some of my photographs and eventually taking over the gala presentations in 2016. I assisted Walt with the GoPros and cataloging each of the videos for several years until I started the H1 Unlimited drone program.”

Lisa’s role in the sport is quite different from Walt’s. “I am the UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) Flight Director for H1 Unlimited,” Lisa explained. “Dan Foard came out to the race in Madison in 2014 hoping to interest the sport in using drones as opposed to helicopters. I saw the potential for drones and the benefits they could bring to our sport.

“Drones at the time, were a technology that officials were not comfortable with nor prepared for. In 2015, Bob Abbot prepared a use-case scenario, that again was denied. In 2016, I reintroduced the concept to H1. They were interested, but the race sites were a bit more of a challenge. Tri-Cities was not interested. Detroit, Madison, and San Diego were open to the idea. Seattle Seafair managers liked the concept but wanted me to do a trial year at other venues to prove that they were reliable.

“After the drones proved viable, Sea-

fair allowed us to bring drones. I continuously work with Seafair to develop and update (with the evolving requirements of the FAA) the use of drones in the most complicated airspace we fly in. The plan is much more detailed, restricted, and requires much more coordination and planning with an air show, including attending the flight briefings with the air show pilots, so we all understand the flight paths and timing of activities.

“We have built a great relationship, which has evolved into working with the Emergency Management Group-Washington and we are developing a drone program for use at events and emergency response, which I am really excited to be a part of. Drones are officially included in the operations of H1 Unlimited.

“In the off season, I basically ‘winterize’ the H1 drones by confirming the maintenance logs, document all the stats for each drone and all batteries, and inspect each drone. I charge batteries throughout the winter so the batteries will not completely discharge, as this damages the life of the batteries. In February, I update all the firmware for the UAS and controllers, confirm that the updates have installed correctly with test flights.

“I begin my FAA authorizations for the test session and Tri-Cities event. Air

spaces are a little complicated at certain sites. Seattle is a Class B and Renton is Class D site airspace, which means there are a lot of rules that must be followed in order to fly there especially with the air show. In comparison, Gunter’sville’s site is Class G, which has far fewer restrictions.

“I bring five drones to each race, three that are ready to fly and two that serve as back-ups. Prior to the drones taking to the air, I conduct a preflight check of each drone, make certain that batteries are charged, updates are done, geofence is unlocked, and everything is ready to go. These drones have been work-horses and currently provide everything that we need for our race events, but they are starting to age so we will be looking at upgrading our drone fleet, hopefully in the near future.

“Before our drones are allowed to fly, I create a map and flight plan of the race venue, including GPS coordinates, detailing exactly where and how high we plan to fly, launch and landing locations, pilot licenses and drone registrations, then submit with application for Airspace Waiver to the FAA for approval. That all has to be done 90 days prior to the event. Next, I have to secure insurance documentation and filming permits as required by each race site and city.



Chris Denslow

Then I do the same thing for the next race on the schedule.”

Walt added, “Lisa is so organized that all of this background work happens invisibly. No one at H1 knows how much work Lisa does to make this happen. Nobody sees how much she does behind the scenes and how organized she is. She shows up to the race site and everything works. That is not easy to do! Not every site has the same requirements. Again, without Lisa’s attention to detail, this would never work!”

Lisa continued: “Brian Montgomery and I fly the drones at each event, and Dan Foard joins us at select races when we need more coverage. We use the drones for two major jobs. During the heat races, our drones are connected to the live-stream crew, who are live streaming video to fans all across the country, and to the referees who monitor and record the output to instantly review when needed.”

The controller Lisa has in her hands has a live view of what the drone is seeing. “There is an HDMI cable attached to it which goes into the fanny pack, which has a converter that converts the video from HDMI to SDI, which is then connected to a 200-foot cable that goes to the tower. There, it is converted back to HDMI and splits to the two referee monitors, which are viewed by the referees to make calls as soon as possible.

“The second split goes to Tait Meyer, Jared Meyer, and Matt Johnson who feed the video to the live stream for fans to watch.” All of the live streaming is currently dependent on infrastructure and access to internet at each race site. We are hoping to acquire the equipment necessary to be self-sustainable.

“Our drones take the place of the helicopters that used to fly referees around the racecourses at \$1,500-plus per hour. If there is a questionable call, head referee Rick Sandstrom reviews the video and can make a call within seconds of the offense and communicate that to the driver’s radio personnel in the corral. One



Chris Denslow

good thing about this system is, owners and drivers can view the videos immediately after the call has been made,” Lisa said.

“With the popularity of drones, we have our challenges at race sites,” she continued. “We get rogue drones in the air over the fans and racecourse. When unauthorized drones fly, this causes hazards to the safety of spectators, H1 drones, the unlimited drivers and boats. I plan to work in the off-season to see how we can better control drone access over the racecourse for the safety of all.”

So, why does Lisa do all of this when there is no financial reward and it is so time consuming? “I wanted to prove that drones were a reliable alternative to manned aircraft,” she says. “Our sport needed this improvement. The experience gained while developing the H1 Drone Program has led to developing other drone programs. I was invited to join a team in Florida to fly for Florida Power and Light for disaster response. I have also worked with Dan Foard at ESPN covering soccer tournaments. Drones are a great tool, and the possibilities are endless.”

Several years ago, Walt created the H1 Unlimited app, which is available for Apple and Android and is a must for any serious H1 fan. During the course of two years, Walt spent thousands of hours de-

veloping the app. He beams with pride when he explains everything contained within the app.

“We built the app, which has videos going back to 1955. Fans can search through the app to learn more about a favorite driver, team, and we have every statistic available at the click of a button. You can watch our races on your phone, computer, or smart TV. We have our own YouTube channel where races are streamed live.

“The Meyer brothers are doing an amazing job of 4K streaming. Depending on the bandwidth available at each site, we can even stream in 4K, and it looks better than ever. I know people refer to the 1950s as the golden age of racing, but back then, the only ways to watch races was the live coverage in Seattle, the delayed shows on ABC’s *Wide World of Sports*, the ESPN shows that aired two weeks after each event in the 1980s, or attending the races in person. Now, you can watch a 4K stream while mowing your lawn. What more can you ask?”

One of the amazing aspects of their success is how they have done so much with so little money. Walt and Lisa have devoted so many hours of their lives to make the sport we love more enjoyable. Next time you see either one of them, give them a big “Thank You!” ❖

H1 UNLIMITED 2022 SEASON SUMMARY

Num	Boat	ID#	Driver	Guntersville Gold Cup 6/25-26	Madison Showdown 7/2	Madison Governor's Cup 7/3	Tri-Cities Columbia Cup 7/29-31	Seattle Showdown 8/6	Seattle HomeStreet Cup 8/7	San Diego Showdown 9/17	San Diego Muncey Cup 9/18	Subtotal	Total Pts.
1.	U-1	Miss HomeStreet	1801	JimmyShane	1600	1st 1300	1st 2100	1st 800	3rd 894	1st 800	1st 1300	9,194	
2.	U-9	Lynx Healthcare	92102	Corey Peabody	1st 1469	780						3,049	7,839
U-9	Lynx Healthcare/	Miss Tri-Cities	1496	J. Michael Kelly			2nd 1670	3rd 525	1st 1085	3rd 625		4,790	
		Boitano Homes											
		Miss Tri-Cities											
3.	U-91	Miss Goodman Real Estate	0706	Jeff Bernard	2nd 1319	2nd 810	4th 754	4th 469	2nd 970	2nd 600	3rd 699	6,221	
4.	U-11	Miss Colleen	2111	Jamie Nilsen	3rd 1069	3rd 875						3,934	
		Miss Joker's Casino					3rd 675	225	402				
		Miss The Old Cannery Furniture Warehouse											
		Legend Yacht Transport											
5.	U-40	Miss Beacon Plumbing	0721	Dave Villwock	1369	W/D	380	2nd 700	376	4th 169	4th 519	2,825	3,195
				Dustin Echols		W/D				300	W/D 70	370	
6.	U-8	Miss Tri-Cities	1496	J. Michael Kelly	1125	4th 408						2,058	
7.	U-3	Griggs presents Miss Ace Hardware	0203	Jimmy King	825		50					875	

HYDROFILE

Race Team News by Lon Erickson



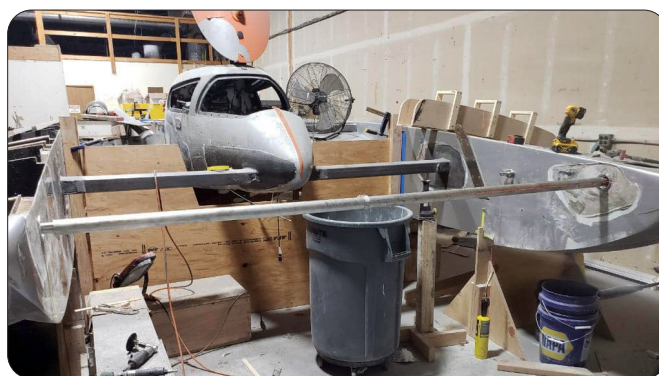
As we mentioned last month, the teams are “hitting the road running,” heading towards 2023. We have boat rebuilds, updates, crew changes, drivers moving, and next season’s assignments have begun.

U-1 Miss Madison Racing/U-91 Goodman Real Estate

At this point, probably the biggest move so far is with this group. After sitting out a year, the 2018 national champion and APBA Gold Cup winner Andrew Tate returns with this team and will be in the cockpit of the U-91 *Miss Goodman Real Estate*. The U-91 hull will receive a complete rebuild over the winter, under the direction of crew chief Mike Hanson. Jeff Bernard is no longer with the team and will be focused on driving Michael Grendell’s GP-79 *Bad Influence* in the Grand Prix America series. The Madison Racing team is also currently in discussions with their choice to fill the seat in the U-1 *Miss HomeStreet*, vacated by the retiring Jimmy Shane,

U-8/U-9 Strong Racing

Corey Peabody’s ride is starting to look like a race boat again as the repairs and rebuild of the U-9 continue at the Strong Racing shop (below and middle). A new non-trip section and new sponson frames are being installed. More work is ahead with some new ideas planned, but things are progressing nicely. The U-8 is also getting some attention (bottom) with some new deck sections, winter maintenance, and work on the bottom of the hull.



Hydro News

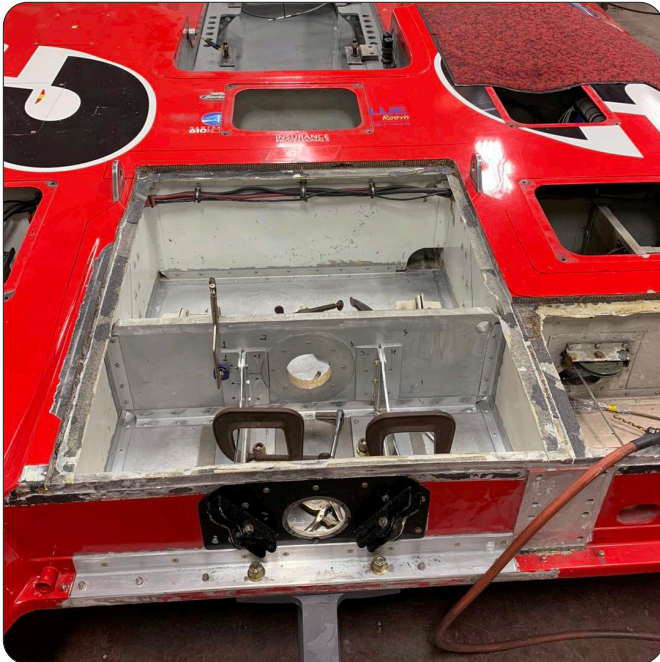


Lon Erickson

Strong Racing Team photos

Go3 Racing

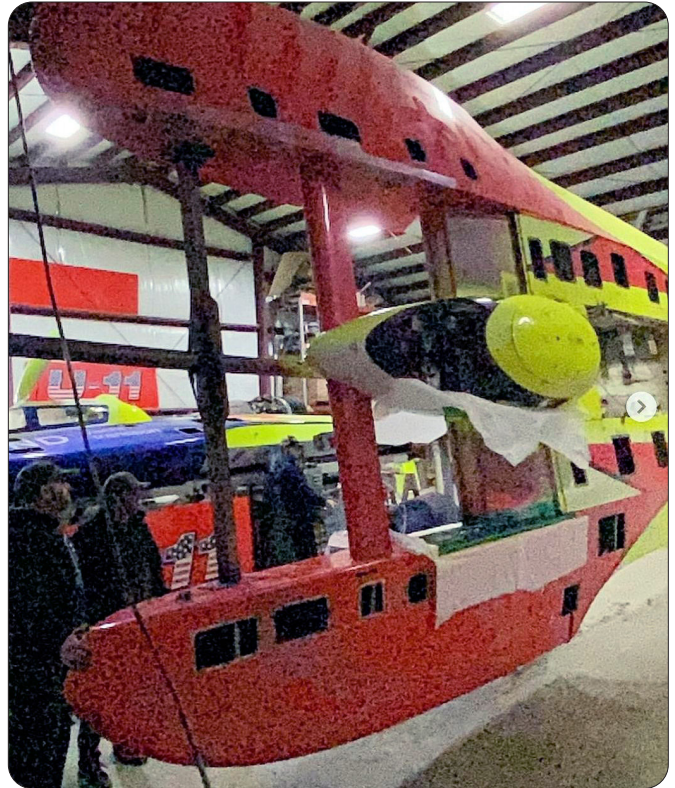
Current structural repairs to the hull have wrapped up for the winter. More work on the hull will come after the Go3 team takes a holiday break.



Go3 Racing Team photos

U-11 Unlimited Racing Group

Winter upgrades are underway on the two hulls at the U-11 shop. The crew had a big shop day when they got work done on both hulls. Here they are rolling over the back-up hull at the URG shop.



URG photo

U-27 Wiggins Racing

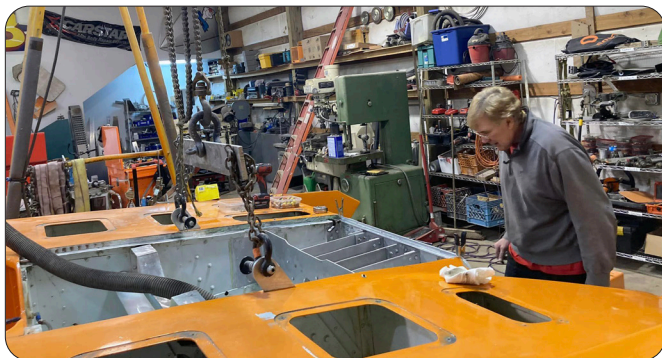
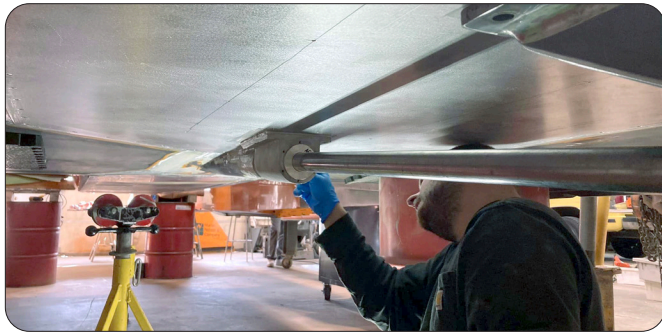
The crew is working on building and attaching runners to the sponsons of the new hull. These will enable different adjustments to the running surfaces that affect the handling and ride of the hull.



Wiggins Racing photo

U-40 Bucket List Racing

Repairs on the U-40 continue at the BLR “Hydroville” shop. The team has been rebuilding the boat’s transom and working on the bottom, along with the prop shaft (below). Dave Villwock has been involved with the repairs (bottom) and is scheduled to stay with the team through December 2022, at which point his plans have not been announced. Dustin Echols is signed on to drive the U-40 in 2023, but he is also getting back in the seat of one of his former Grand Prix rides. He is set to drive the GP-17 *Shockwave* hydroplane that was recently acquired by Bryan Richards. Echols, the Stocklins, and Richards have already discussed any potential racing schedule conflicts and have a contingency plan. According to Dustin, “Bucket List is my primary responsibility, but I am very excited to go GP racing again.”



Bucket List Racing photos

Race Shop Throwback

Ever wondered what happens to former race shops? We did too and went to check it out. Below are photos of the Leland Racing team shop in Kirkland, Wash., taken in 2014 and 2018. The bottom photos show what the former Leland complex looks like today. It isn't clear from our research just what the purpose of the buildings and property is now, but the property is now gated and there are no signs of its racing past.



Lon Erickson photos

COMMENTS FROM H1

Jan Shaw, Director of Operations



Winter is a time for planning, and that's the case this year like no other in recent memory. Several groups of H1 officials have been meeting regularly since the annual meeting in October making plans for changes that we anticipate for the 2023 season and beyond.

Several ideas for rule changes came out of the annual meeting. The Rules and Competition Committee has met several times since then to look closer at those ideas and to consider whether any should be recommended to the Board of Directors for adoption. A technical subcommittee is also analyzing ideas related to the minimum boat weight, certification of spare parts, measurement tolerances for skid fins, and the pull test for steering cables.

Other ideas being considered touch on areas such as N2 limits, the frequency of drivers' meetings, driver's representatives, course judges, the placement of a buoy to establish lanes, when lap speeds don't need to be announced, cubic-inch restrictions for piston engines, and

whether it's necessary to have a countdown for the "five to the five" warning. Regarding the latter, we are considering a new set of clocks that would be placed in the boats.

The Board has also formed a special committee that will look at race formats and starting procedures. That group will consider the formats for races, whether there should be lane assignments at the start or whether drivers should fight for lanes, and whether the minimum-speed rule should be eliminated.

Meanwhile, another group of volunteers has been discussing communications and marketing for H1 Unlimited. The group is working on a goal of increasing the sport's overall value by attracting new fans and building brand awareness for the racing series and its drivers.

The committee has already met as a whole several times since the annual meeting and has divided itself into eight work groups that also are meeting to develop specific plans. One of those groups is developing an overall strategic plan for

H1's communication effort, for example, while another will be focused on plans for the live streaming broadcasts from each race site.

Another work group is considering ways to improve the design and content of the H1 Unlimited website, one is planning print media, and another is looking at various ideas for community initiatives. Social media is the focus of another work group, promotions and advertising the subject of another, and better coordination with race sites and race teams is the goal of another work group.

It's an ambitious effort involving a large number of people, but the planning is already underway and making excellent progress. There's a great deal of work yet to go, however. The communications and marketing committee will continue meeting regularly for the next several months to plan for the 2023 season and will continue their work well into the future to improve the way that H1 Unlimited communicates with its fans and other important audiences. ❖

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Letters are welcome, but may be edited for clarity and space.

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