



Letter from the editor

by Bob Silva

Climb aboard for the tale of SHANTY II and the William Waggoner, Jr. Racing Team. The dangerous early days of Unlimited hydroplane racing, when speeds far exceeded the safety standards. So, don your leather Cairns helmet and zip up your cotton kapok lifejacket. Prepare for a fascinating ride!

American Power Boat Association

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The SHANTY II Story

Five-hundred-thousand people gathered along the western shoreline of Seattle's Lake Washington on August 7, 1955. Thousands more clung to the railings of the floating bridge that crossed the lake. A Navy blimp and helicopters hovered overhead. Nine-hundred pleasure boats were moored to a log boom that separated them from the race course. A Coast Guard Cutter and smaller boats patrolled the outer edges of a 3 ¾ mile oval race course. They were there to watch the 48th running of the American Power Boat Association (APBA) Gold Cup. The judge's stand sat on high scaffolding shared by camera crews from Seattle television stations KING and KOMO. Announcers, spectators, and participants felt the tension. Would Seattle retain the Gold Cup or would the race return to Detroit? The owner of the winning boat will determine the location for next year's race. Seattle's SLO-MO-SHUN IV and SLO-MO-SHUN V dominated the Gold Cup races since taking the Trophy away from Detroit in 1950. But Detroit-based hydroplanes were plentiful and intent on bringing the race back to the Detroit River.

Previous qualifying runs and heat races whittled the 22 entries down to the fastest 12 boats. Racing action included three boats sinking, two catching fire and, the most frightening accident of all, a 2 ½ ton Unlimited hydroplane committed a 360-degree back-flip during qualifying. It was SLO-MO-SHUN V, U-37. She became airborne at 160 mph and went over backwards. She flew 50 feet into the air before tossing driver Lou Fageol out like a rag doll. The hydro landed right side up. Fageol hit the water hard and floated face down, unconscious. Luckily, two nearby Sea Scouts patrolling in a small runabout were able to hold his head above water until the Coast Guard arrived. Fageol was rushed by helicopter to Seattle's Maynard Hospital. Thousands watched the crash broadcast live on their black-and-white TV sets at home. APBA race official Lou Eppel declared the accident, "The most frightening sight I ever saw." Although in serious condition, forty-eight-year-old veteran driver Lou "Lead Foot" Fageol survived the wreck. From his hospital bed, he announced his retirement from racing. The defending Gold Cup Champion SLO-MO-SHUN V was too damaged to continue racing.

GOLD CUP won by *Slo-mo-shun V*
equipped with **CHAMPION SPARK PLUGS**

The 1954 Gold Cup race on Seattle's Lake Washington saw Lou Fageol drive Slo-mo-shun V to a sensational, record-breaking, 3-heat sweep in this classic event. This was the fifth consecutive Gold Cup victory for Stan Sayres and his Slo-mo-shun boats. Mr. Sayres says, "Thanks to Champions, we've never had to worry about plug performance in establishing the many records held by the Slo-mo-shuns." Remember, only Champions will give your engine Championship performance!

CHAMPION SPARK PLUG COMPANY, TOLEDO 1, OHIO

Just before the final heat, the Navy's Blue Angels performed their precision aerial maneuvers in their Grumman Panther jets. The sight sent the crowd's enthusiasm up a notch. Then, out of the blue, Veteran test pilot Tex Johnson flew Boeing Aircraft's huge 707 prototype over the lake. All the top Boeing and major airline executives were there to observe the new passenger airliner that would soon introduce the public to the "Jet Age." Johnson then surprised everyone by putting the \$20,000,000 Boeing 707 into a barrel roll. Boeing executives were in complete shock. They assumed Tex would just do a flyby. They had no idea their 707 was even capable of a barrel roll. They held their breath and watched as their prized plane returned for a second flyby and barrel roll. The spectators were left in open-mouthed awe. It was now time for the final 8-lap, thirty-mile race to see who would take home the treasured Gold Cup Trophy.

The deafening, ground shaking roar from the field of Unlimited hydroplanes charging the start line was spellbinding. Feeling the ground shaking under their feet was one of the attractions for the hundreds-of-thousands of fans. Another was watching Seattle's beloved SLO-MO-SHUN IV, U-27 lead the race. She was in the lead until a cracked exhaust header suddenly caused a deck fire. Driver Joe Taggart was forced to drop out. But a new Seattle entry, MISS THRIFTWAY, U-60, with rookie driver Bill Muncey at the wheel, inherited the lead. The Seattle boat coasted to win the third and final heat. Detroit's GALE V, U-55 and SUCH CRUST III, G-22 followed. Although MISS THRIFTWAY crossed the finish line first, 26-year-old Lee Schoenith in GALE V was awarded the overall win. That's because Gale V was awarded a bonus 400 points because her total elapsed speed for the 90-miles raced (three 30-mile heats) was faster than MISS THRIFTWAY's total elapsed speed. The Gold Cup trophy was heading back to Detroit.

One of the more colorful spectators was standing on the deck of a large yacht, wearing his ever-present cowboy hat and puffing on an expensive cigar. It was William "Bill" Waggoner Jr., a wealthy third-generation oilman and cattle rancher from Vernon, Texas taking in the day's exciting events. He couldn't wait to have an Unlimited hydroplane of his own and become part of the boat racing hoopla. Waggoner would soon join Bill Boeing, Henry and Edgar Kaiser, Horace Dodge, and Sam Dupont as a member of an

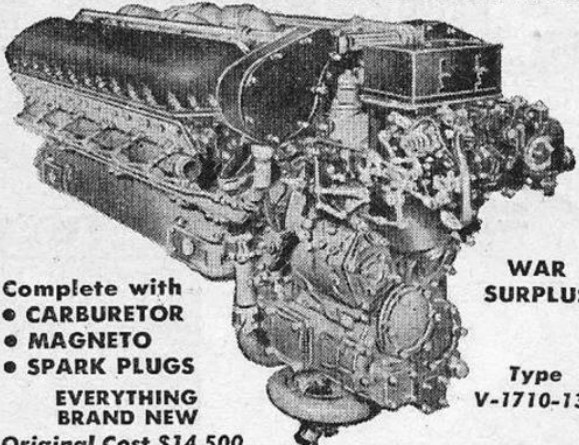
exclusive group of multi-millionaire Unlimited owners. Money was no object and their boats had personal names instead of sponsor names. Being accustomed to having the best of everything, Waggoner went straight to Ted Jones. Jones was the designer of the fastest prop-driven boat in the world, the 178 mph SLO-MO-SHUN IV. He agreed to design a hydroplane for Waggoner, to be built by Les Staudacher in his Kawkawlin, Michigan shop. It would take Staudacher and three master boat builders five weeks to complete the 29 ft. 4 in. hull at a cost of \$15,000 (\$170,000 in today's dollars). Waggoner also purchased REBEL SUH, U-11 from Jones and his partner, Kirn Armistead. She struck a partially submerged milk bottle and became one of the hydros that sunk during the Gold Cup race. Jones agreed to repair the hull's damaged bottom. Waggoner now owned two UnlimiteDs but had no pit crew, no drivers, no engines. Little did he know, his future engine builder was also at the 1955 Gold Cup race.

Howard Gidovlenko, a hard-headed, hard-drinking Russian-born American, was considered the best at building World War II Allison V-12 racing engines. A wizard at extracting the most horsepower from the huge 1710 cubic inch Allison engine, he was noted for building record-setting engines for Stan Sayres' SLO-MO-SHUN IV and V. He also built Allison's for WW II racing airplanes. Gidovlenko flew P-38 fighters during WW II and competed in the Cleveland Air Races, piloting his Lightning P-38.

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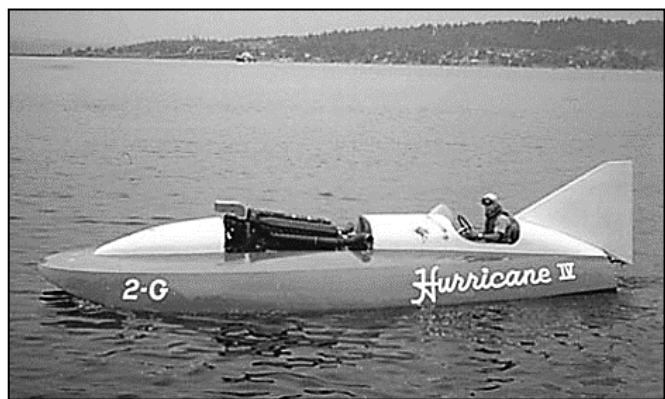
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Experienced racecar driver Ray Crawford was itching to get behind the wheel of an Unlimited hydro. He drove a Lincoln Stock Car to win the grueling 1954 Carrera Pan Americana Road Race; he finished thirteenth in the 12 hours of Sebring; and he came in twenty-third at the 39th running of the Indy 500. Crawford convinced his buddy Howard Gidovlenko that they should build an Unlimited hydro. Howard's friends from an aerospace group helped design the hull using a new device they called an "Electric Brain" (an early computer). Crawford's Zephyr Company manufactured check-out stands for his chain of supermarkets and built the awkward-looking, 30-foot hydroplane. It featured an unusually deep freeboard and the Allison was mounted below the deck line. A huge air scoop faced the bow. The aerospace group confidently predicted speeds of 240 mph for Crawford's ZEPHYR FURY, U-44. Despite several attempts to qualify for the 1955 Gold Cup race, the U-44 refused to get up on plane and failed to attain the minimum qualifying speed of 85 mph. Crawford bitterly remarked later, "It's designed as an airplane but runs like a submarine." Following that fiasco, Gidovlenko signed on as Bill Waggoner's engine builder.

Hearing of Waggoner's search for a driver, Gidovlenko recommended Bill Stead. Stead gained some driving experience while racing his Gold Cup hydro HURRICANE IV, 2-G. The 1948 Fred Wickens-built hull was described as "fabulously fast and equally horrifying" by a scribe who accepted a one-time ride. Stead narrowly missed qualifying her for the 1954 Gold Cup. During the Salton Sea 1-Mile speed trials, Stead pushed HURRICANE IV to a top speed of 163 mph. It was the third fastest speed recorded by an Unlimited hydroplane. Stead proudly displayed his hydro at the Mapes Casino/Hotel in Reno until a carelessly tossed cigarette ignited a puddle of fuel near the boat setting her on fire. By the time the fire was extinguished, a two-foot hole burned through the deck and part of a sponson. Stead, heart-broken, towed HURRICANE IV to his cattle ranch outside Sparks, Nevada. He stored her in a barn where she would sit hidden for the next 40 years.

You might have seen HURRICANE IV in action. She's featured in the opening scenes of the 1954 film *Magnificent Obsession*, starring Rock Hudson and Jane Wyman. Imagine seeing that sight on a 30-foot tall movie screen!



Bill Waggoner, with his flamboyant personality, was quite the opposite of soft-spoken Bill Stead (with his calm demeanor). But they had cattle ranching in common and got along quite well. Stead did much of his own ranch work, spending twelve to fourteen hours a day in the saddle. "Roping and wrestling calves helps develop the shoulders," he stated. "It's more fun to wrestle with the boat, but it's more profitable to wrestle steers." Stead was hired to drive REBEL SUH, U-11, now rechristened MAVERICK, U-12.

Ted Jones was a good study of hydroplane drivers. He suggested Lieutenant Colonel Russ Schleeh to pilot Waggoner's newly-built hydro SHANTY I, U-29. Colonel Schleeh flew 28 missions in a B-17 during WW II. He was also an experienced Air Force test pilot. He helped develop the Boeing XB-47 "Stratojet" bomber and he nearly died in a crash while testing Northrup's experimental "Flying Wing." Heeding Ted Jones' advice, Waggoner hired Schleeh, theorizing, "If you're going to deal with speed, get someone to whom speed is old stuff." But Col. Schleeh's only hydroplane racing experience was at the wheel of REBEL SUH when she sank during the '55 Gold Cup. Waggoner then recruited Bill Newman to maintain the Allison V-12s, along with crew chief Jack Ramsey to oversee the 12-member crew. Waggoner's team colors were red and white on gold. The race team was now ready for the upcoming 1956 season. But were drivers Stead and Schleeh ready?

Schleeh proved he was ready when he drove SHANTY I to win their first three races. They set a 3/4 mile competition record averaging 113 mph, they won the prestigious International Harmsworth Trophy, and they captured the Unlimited National Championship. The Colonel also won the driver's

points Championship. The Gold Cup Trophy eluded Waggoner when SHANTY I conked out while leading the race.

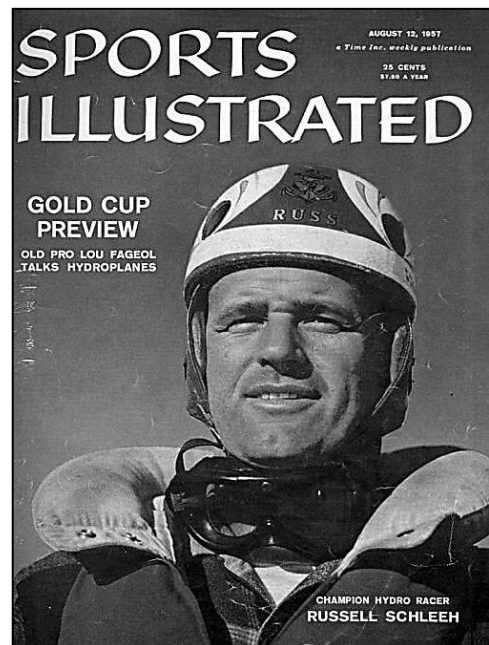


Mary Beth "Shanty" Waggoner, Colonel Schlee, and Bill Waggoner with the International Harmsworth Trophy.
Photo: Detroit Historical Society

Bill Stead and team MAVERICK, U-12 were plagued by DNFs (did not finish). Stead remarked, "I felt like MAVERICK was racing in the shadow of SHANTY I." The U-12 finished tenth out of thirty-one boats in APBA's overall points standings. Team SHANTY was riding high when Col. Schlee's portrait was featured on the cover of Sports Illustrated in 1957. It is said that a sports figure who appears on SI's cover would be jinxed with injury or suffer misfortune. It certainly would prove true for Col. Schlee.

Waggoner chose Rickey Iglesias as the new crew chief as they headed to Washington's Apple Cup to kick off the 1957 season. Hotels and motels sold-out weeks before the race. Fifteen-thousand cars carrying 60,000 "Cup-Happy" fans from Seattle made the 180-mile trip to the small town of Chelan (population 250) to watch the "Thunderboats" race on Lake Chelan. The SI jinx hit Schlee during the final heat. Schlee made a sharp maneuver to avoid hitting a stalled boat. He was tossed 30 feet out of the cockpit and was lucky to escape without injury. Bill Stead drove MAVERICK to their first race win, but it would prove to be team Waggoner's only victory that year. And all those race fans leaving Lake Chelan en masse, created the biggest traffic jam in Eastern Washington history.

Bad luck continued to dog Schlee and SHANTY I. During test runs for a shot at setting the 1-Mile Unlimited speed record, she threw a propeller blade. The violent shaking wrenched the strut off and shook loose the screws fastening the hull's bottom. The repairs left a slight bow to SHANTY's bottom, causing the boat to be tremendously unsteady. "I had more power than ever from Gidovlenko's engines, but the hull couldn't handle it, you could hardly drive it," complained Schlee. That continued for several races until they discovered the bow in the bottom. A couple of shingles were added to straighten it out. SHANTY I was running great and handling fine going into the President's Cup race on the Potomac River in Washington D.C. Schlee recalled, "I was doing the starts at 160...it was just beautiful, but then the sponson just came off!" The crash looked so violent that some spectators thought the boat exploded. The driver's seat and pieces of wrecked hull were scattered across the water. The Bell steering wheel was bent nearly in half from Schlee's desperate attempt to hold on. Unconscious and face down amid the wreckage, he would have drowned if not for two quick-thinking Coast Guardsmen who dove into the river from a 40-foot cutter and swam to his rescue. He was rushed to a D.C. hospital in severe shock and with deep bruises, lucky to be alive. It would be months before Schlee would return to the seat of an Unlimited hydroplane. Bill Stead drove MAVERICK, U-12 to a respectable fifth place in national points standings. But Bill Waggoner was depressed. His prized hydro, and personal favorite of Ted Jones, SHANTY I, was now just junk.



By 1958, many of the top race teams were switching to the more powerful 2,500 horsepower Rolls-Merlin V-12s. An auxiliary two-stage supercharger was added to MAVERICK's Allison V-12, boosting her horsepower. The move paid off. Stead won three out of thirteen races and placed third in the 1958 National Championship.

After the demise of SHANTY I at the President's Cup, Gidovlenko and Col. SchleeH tried to persuade Bill Waggoner to build a SHANTY II based on aeronautical theory and principles. SchleeH contacted the people at Convair who built the Sea Dart. The Sea Dart was a US Navy jet fighter designed to take off and land on water. He said, that, "They thought for sure we can build a boat that will be superb and superior to present boats. No problem." Hubert Brooke, chief of hydro-dynamics at Convair in San Diego, designed SHANTY II with help from engineers at a research lab. It was an extreme departure from the traditional 3-point hydroplane. The design used a 2-point suspension theory, riding on the prop and a single ski runner mounted beneath the hull. Brooke claimed that, "The single ski permits greater maneuverability, tighter turns and less friction. We think this 2-point suspension will permit it to corner faster. It can bank like a motorcycle on the turns." Extensive testing, using four different scale models in a long basin tank and filmed in ultra slow-motion, provided an optimized design. He was confident his design would work, despite the fact that he'd never even seen an Unlimited hydroplane race! Ted Jones saw the blue prints and exclaimed, "The first time SHANTY II takes a turn at speed she'll flip over."



The project would prove to be the most expensive racing hydroplane ever built, with a price tag of

\$240,000 (2.5 million in today's dollars). The 3-ton, 32-foot aluminum hull featured a \$14,000 lightweight, magnesium keel. She was built in a hanger at Waggoner's Bonanza Airlines in Los Angeles. Col. SchleeH and Gidovlenko, were overseeing the construction. They determined that since Brooke had never seen an Unlimited race, his Convair design for SHANTY II would never work. They incorporated some questionable alterations to Convair's blue prints. They changed the gently-tapered ski runner that merged with the bow. It was made deeper and wider, ending bluntly at bow. The driver's cockpit was moved. The engine was moved. The moves drastically changed the balance point of the hydro. The hull was finished in Waggoner's team colors. Crew members were confident the 2-point design would hit 200 mph. Expectations were riding high when secretive testing began at Lake Mead on July 23, 1958.

Colonel SchleeH, with years of test pilot experience, showed no apprehension when he climbed aboard SHANTY II, fired up the Allison and headed out for her first test run. Kicking up a 15-foot high roostertail, with spray shooting out both sides along the stabilizing wings, SchleeH pushed her to about 100 mph. The hull bucked, it rocked side-to-side, and it porpoised. The Colonel also put her through some tight hairpin turns before returning to the launch area. Engine cooling problems, along with a faulty shaft log seal, prevented further testing that day. SchleeH was optimistic saying, "I was just coasting, there is every indication that this will be a successful boat." Bill Waggoner was jubilant over the initial test. The crew hoped to have SHANTY II ready for the upcoming Lake Tahoe Mile High Regatta.

Minor repairs were made and SHANTY II was transported back to Lake Mead. SchleeH took her out for more trial runs between the Lake Mead Marina and Boulder Island. Between runs, in an effort to smooth out her ride, the crew moved the ballast around. Breaking for lunch, SHANTY II was left unattended at the dock. Gidovlenko quietly snuck into the cockpit. Then he sped off! What compelled him to do that? Perhaps it was frustration. He repeatedly asked Waggoner if he could race some heats driving MAVERICK, but Waggoner's reply was always, "No, I have a driver, you stick to building the engines." Maybe he was eager to prove that his design changes to Convair's blueprints really were a great

idea. Whatever the reason, to the dismay of everyone he kept making high speed runs.

After several passes, he put the boat into a tight turn. That move stuffed the hull, bow first, and then SHANTY II tipped over. Furious, Col. Schlee and mechanic George Weatherspoon jumped aboard a runabout and rushed to the scene. SHANTY II suffered extensive damage to her bow and lost her tail fin, windshield and instrument panel. Gidovlenko was lucky to suffer only a broken rib, along with cuts and bruises. He claimed that ballast in the hull came loose and shifted, causing the crash. Days of discussion about how to proceed followed. In the end it was deemed the damage was too extensive to repair. Fewer than six hours of test time had been spent on the boat when Waggoner proclaimed, "Shanty II will be scrapped." But she escaped the scrap heap. Bill Stead towed her to his ranch and stored her in the barn with the fire damaged HURRICANE IV.

Waggoner called Ted Jones and placed a rush order for a 3-point conventional hydroplane. He named her MAVERICK II with U-00 for the racing number. He hoped the double zero number would bring good luck. She was built in record time. To reduce weight, no aluminum was used for reinforcing the hull frames. It would only be used to cover the bottom and sponson running surfaces. The hull was made almost entirely from quarter inch, 5-ply aircraft birch.



Driver Bill Stead wearing the new Gentex racing lifejacket on deck of Bill Waggoner's MAVERICK II, U-00.
Photo by George Little

Waggoner planned to race the new hydro, MAVERICK II, U-00, with Bill Stead driving. Colonel Schlee would drive the old hull,

MAVERICK, U-12. In February 1959, Stead took the U-12 out on Lake Mead for pre-season runs to test propellers. Traveling at 170 mph, the supercharger suddenly exploded, spraying aviation fuel on the hot exhaust pipes. The fuel erupted into flames and blew back into the cockpit on Stead. He had a choice, jump out at high speed and risk breaking his neck or wait for the boat to slow down before bailing out. He chose the latter, but suffered bad burns to his hands, arms and legs. Luckily, he was wearing a helmet face shield instead of goggles, preventing facial burns. Struggling to stay afloat in his burned and torn open kapok lifejacket, Stead nearly drowned while waiting for the rescue boat. The MAVERICK, U-12 burned to the waterline and sank. She was a total loss.

Stead, who already experienced over twenty-five supercharger explosions while driving hydroplanes, said that this one was by far the worst. He wrote a letter to the APBA safety committee strongly urging them to require safer lifejackets and better helmets. His letter inspired APBA to embrace McHal's fiberglass helmet and the new Gentex lifejacket.



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MAVERICK, U-00 was the only Waggoner boat running in 1959, leaving Col. Schlee without a ride. A lot of test time was spent at Lake Mead trying to fix problems that arose with the new hydro. The U-00 was exceptionally fast but handled erratically in the turns. She suffered from a tendency for the right sponson to dig in, or hook, causing spin outs.

The 1959 racing season began at Chelan's Apple Cup Regatta and "Hydromania" was at an all-time high. MAVERICK was in the lead of the second heat when she violently spun out in the middle of a turn. Stead was tossed out of the cockpit and landed on the hull's deck. Water punched a four-foot hole in her side and she was sinking. Stead stood up and frantically waved his helmet to stop the race. The not-so-lucky U-00

was descending so quickly that the rescue boat barely got her back to a crane where lift slings could pull her from the water. The damaged hydro returned to Seattle for repairs.

Along with repairs to the hull, Jones made alterations to the sponsons and transom. MAVERICK was now even faster. The U-00 did prove to be a lucky number after all. She went on to win five of ten races, four in a row until flipping at the President's Cup. Stead's wins included the Gold Cup and captured the National Championship over twenty-five other boats. Bill Stead also won the Driver's High Points award. He was named Unlimited Driver of 1959 and elected to the Marine Hall of Fame. Stead retired from Unlimited racing saying, "I want to quit while I'm still ahead." He became Safety Committee Chairman for APBA and he organized the Mapes, Pyramid and Harrah's Cup Regattas.

But Lady Luck frowned upon Bill Waggoner. A third of the way through the season, at Idaho's Diamond Cup race, Waggoner suddenly became ill and was airlifted to his Texas home. Doctors deemed him too sick to attend the remaining regattas. He missed the award ceremonies at the end of the '59 season, too ill to collect his racing award laurels. In January of 1960 Waggoner announced his retirement from racing. In four short years, William Waggoner, Jr. brought home the Harmsworth and Gold Cup Trophies, won 12 of 31 Unlimited races, and captured two National Championships.

Waggoner donated MAVERICK, U-00 to the Reno Regatta Association in 1961. He passed away in April of 1962, at the age of 57. The U-00 raced as MISS RENO for one season and continued as a top competitor. She ran as TAHOE MISS, Bill Harrah's first Unlimited, in 1962 and 1963. Harrah sold her to Bernie Little in 1964, who raced her as MISS BUDWEISER. She lost a sponson and crashed at San Diego's Mission Bay Regatta in 1967. Then, outdated by newer, faster designs, she frequently changed hands. The hull was unceremoniously scrapped and burned in 1976.

Stead returned to his passion for air races. He worked tirelessly to establish the Reno National Air Races in 1964. On April 28, 1966, Stead was in Florida practicing for the air races piloting his, LITTLE MISS RENO, a Midget Mustang racing plane. A bolt for the

elevator failed and the plane went into a 30-degree dive and plunged into the waters of Tampa Bay killing the forty-five-year-old. His death was a shock felt by the hydroplane and air racing communities. Bill Stead is fondly remembered as one of the all-time greats of Unlimited hydroplane racing.



*Bill Stead with one of his steers he wrestled.
Photo: Reno Gazette Journal*

California Speedboat Association member Ken Murphy began racing limited class inboards in 1948. From a PODH named LIL' PHIL to the 280 hydro named for his Sacramento industrial scale company, STEEL-A-WEIGH. In 1965 he purchased the Unlimited MISS SEATTLE, U-37 (the former SLO-MO-SHUN V), from the Stoen Brothers of Seattle. Renamed BERRYESSA BELLE, U-37, Murphy and driver Bob Miller campaigned the U-37 for several years. Murphy received a call from Bill Stead's widow, Lila, in 1967. She was hoping Ken could help her find a buyer for HURRICANE IV. Murphy drove to the Stead ranch to look at the old hydro. What he found was a big surprise - SHANTY II was also stored there. The aluminum hull was badly beat up, and was missing her running gear and the Allison V-12 engine. Murphy was smitten by the looks of SHANTY II and paid Lila \$1,000 for the 2-point hydro. He planned to turn the SHANTY II into a sightseeing boat for cruising the Sacramento River. He talked with Ted Jones, who suggested stabilizing her ride by removing the ski-runner and adding two small sponsons. Lake Tahoe's Pete Carey made those modifications. In place of the huge Allison engine, Murphy purchased a pair of smaller 300 horsepower, Jaguar V-12s. This allowed room in the engine bay for Carey to add seating for two passengers. A local Boy Scout Troup took on the project of stripping the paint and then engine-turning the entire 32 ft. hull. Unfortunately,

Murphy ran out of funds and a bank lien claim seized the SHANTY II as collateral. She was sold at auction to a scrap collector for \$1,200. Once again, the SHANTY II dropped out of sight.

HURRICANE IV was donated by the Stead family to the Seattle Hydroplane and Race Boat Museum in 1986. Ken Muscatel bought her in 1997, and she has been restored to the look of her 1954 days of racing.

Howard Gidovlenko continued to build the big Allison V-12 racing engines for hydros and racing planes throughout the 1960s. He developed an interest in sports car racing and his Avia Union engine shop became known for its high-performance Jaguar parts. In 1963, he purchased a racing E-Type Jaguar from West Coast Jaguar distributor Kjell Qvale for \$5,230. The car was one of twelve built by Jaguar to compete in Grand Touring races against Ferrari and Aston Martin. The high pedigree car, driven by Frank Morrill and Ed Leslie, finished first in class and seventh overall at the 12-Hours of Sebring, in March of '63. The factory-built Jaguar featured a 3.8-litre, 320 horsepower aluminum straight-six engine, special racing suspension, and an aluminum chassis and body panels. He turned his attention to preparing the car for the 1964 24-Hours of Daytona race. A hotly-contested divorce from his wife lead Gidovlenko to hide the Jag at his La Mirada home. Parked in a corner of the garage and covered over with stacks of cardboard boxes, the rare Jaguar sat undiscovered for over 30 years. Among auto collectors Gidovlenko's Jaguar became known as "The Missing Lightweight." The Jag was found by family members following Howard Gidovlenko's passing in 1998. Only 2,600 miles showed on the odometer when sent to auction in Monterey. The Jaguar sold for the remarkable high bid of \$872,050.



Colonel Russ SchleeH continued to drive Unlimiteds. At the 1960 Seattle Seafair Regatta the engine exploded in the Ron Jones designed cabover, THRIFTWAY TOO, U-62, and he was badly burned.

He then drove for Sam Dupont in NITROGEN TOO, U-79. He spent two racing seasons driving MISS RENO, U-00 and TAHOE MISS, U-11. His final race was in 1963 aboard MISS EXCIDE, U-101.5. SchleeH fondly recalled racing Unlimiteds. "Probably the greatest thrill of my hydroplane experience was my first ride in one of these thundering, spectacular, and beautiful boats. I thoroughly enjoy speed in any form and can honestly say that the thrill of speed is herein realized in its rarest form." Following 8 years as a USAF test pilot, he became General LeMay's aide in the Strategic Air Command. SchleeH moved to Mission Viejo, California following his retirement in 1992. The Colonel passed away in 2012. He was 92 years young.

In 1997, Mike Paveo, owner of Clarksburg Air Repair, was performing some low-altitude flight tests when he was attracted to a large, glistening object sitting near the Sacramento River bank. Intrigued, Paveo returned to the airport and with employee Steve Wilkie, drove his truck to the location where he spotted the mysterious object from the air. The shiny-mystery-thingy was sitting in a field under a tree, filled with leaves and covered in debris. "When I first saw it from a distance it looked like a Booneville Salt Flats racer," recalled Wilkie. "But once we were closer, I had no idea what it was," he added. It was long, skinny and shaped like a guided missile. And it was well made, not some backyard project. There were no identifying markings: no name, no number, and no engine or running gear. They found the owner nearby at Jay's Towing Co. Jay said he had no idea what it was built to do. He had bought it at auction for metal scrap but never got around to cutting it up. Paveo and Wilkie paid his asking price of \$1,200. They inflated the trailer tires, which amazingly held air, and towed it to store in an aircraft hanger. They power washed the debris off and found SHANTY II, U-29 faintly etched into the aluminum. That didn't mean anything to them as neither of them had seen a hydroplane race. It was love at first sight for Wilkie's father-in-law, George McIntyre, who bought Paveo's share of the U-29. It sat out of sight in a hanger for 2 years, until Wilkie received a call from Doug Ford. Ford was doing research for his book titled "What Were They Thinking" about out-of-the-box Unlimited hydro designs that were unsuccessful yet inspirational. Ford traced down the possible whereabouts of U-29 through an "Unlimited News Journal" article. Then CSA commodore Bill Walti



Steve Wilkie in his SHANTY II. Note the stabilizing wings near the cockpit. The boat was originally designed to bank into turns at high speed instead of sliding through turns like other hydros. The wings would prevent U-29 from flipping when banking. But secondary design changes made it impossible for U-29 to lean like a motorcycle, negating the need for the wings.

contacted Steve and recruited him as a club member. And a trip to the Seattle's Hydroplane Museum really piqued Wilkie's interest in getting SHANTY II running and back on the water. Allison V-12 engines were now selling for upwards of \$50,000, so that wasn't feasible. But there was plenty of room for a 455 cubic inch Oldsmobile with 370 horsepower. Wilkie and McIntyre added a dashboard, gauges and running gear. Dave Triano of Tahoe replaced the missing tail fin, restored the engine cowling and hooked up the steering gear. SHANTY II was now operable and water-worthy. Her first official public appearance was Big Wake Weekend at Folsom Dam. The 2013 event was, fittingly, an Unlimited race (now called H-1). The SHANTY II attracted a crowd. Boat racers, photographers, and reporters alike were surprised to see the unique 55-year-old hydroplane. Although some of them knew her history, few had ever seen her in person. All these years later, she still resembles a hydroplane of the future.

Wilkie, now a full-fledged racing hydroplane fan, has an amazing collection of memorabilia and extensive information about SHANTY I and SHANTY II, both MAVERICKS, their drivers, and Bill Waggoner Jr. Steve showed SHANTY II in static display at CSA's

Buckingham 2023 Test & Tune. He plans to bring her back to Buckingham for the May 17-19, 2024 event. It will be a great opportunity to get a good look at the boat that could have revolutionized hydroplane design, had Convair's blueprints been strictly followed when she was built.

A big thank you to CSA member Steve Wilkie for generously sharing the vast information he has gathered about Bill Waggoner Jr, his hydroplanes, drivers and crew members. Wilkie always gets curious onlookers when towing the U-29 down the highway. "Sometimes several cars will pull up alongside and the passengers will begin taking photos or video of SHANTY II. It feels like we're flying in formation," reports Wilkie. Most have no idea what they're taking pictures of; just like Wilkie when he saw her for the first time nearly thirty years ago.

You won't want to miss the next CSA Newsletter. In the Winter issue, we'll look at the founding years of CSA, the varied race sites, old racing photos and more...



Ted Jones shares a laugh following a 1951 test run at the wheel of SLO-MO-SHUN V, U-37. From 1950 to 1966, Unlimited hydroplanes designed by Jones won 75 regattas, 14 Gold Cups, and 10 National Championships. Photo: Finn Livingston

As you cross the bridge into 2024, don't forget to renew your CSA membership!



Voting for CSA's 2024 Board of Directors will be held during the January 9th CSA zoom meeting. You must be a current 2024 member to cast your vote. So be sure to renew your membership before then! You can pay your \$50 membership fee by check or credit card (include card number, expiration date, and cvv number). To renew, or if you have questions, contact CSA Treasurer John Walti.

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