



It's a bird, it's a plane,
It's Miss Elam

The Oberto Championship Series Presents the RCUnlimiteds Newsletter

DECEMBER 2008

Notes From the Chair Happy Holidays to All

The contest board met on a cold Saturday afternoon. The pass was not inviting and so Harry and David Newton understandably chose not to attempt the crossing. David also could not get away from work but being resourceful, Harry joined the meeting by speakerphone. It worked quite well. We are considering doing the same for our January 17, 2009 meeting. Westside people could join from one location and those of us from the Eastside can do the same. And, as Brian put it "it helps to make RCU greener."

Much was accomplished at this, our second meeting of the contest board.

Some of the highlights of the meeting included;

We voted to name the RCU High Point Boat Championship to the Roger Newton RCU Boat High Point Championship.

The Silver Cup will now be officially named the Roger Newton Silver Cup AND will from 2009 forward be recognized as one of the three "Triple Crown" races.

Racers that only have NAMBA insurance will be allowed to race at 2 RCU events per season and the one day APBA insurance will be taken from the basic \$15.00 entry fee. This only brings \$5.00 to the club but it allows another racer to participate and helps to alleviate issues about paying for 2 different insurances to race for NAMBA members.

The 2009 race schedule has tentatively been set. The schedule has been reduced to 12 events in 2009. This is in response to voiced concerns from members that with the cost of traveling it is important to reduce cash outlay. Once posted you will note that except for the 2 races in Marysville and the Tri-Cities, most all the remaining races will be held in Ellensburg. Everyone seems to agree that it is a good site and does not take excessive travel time to get to, even if you can only attend on Sunday. We are also continuing the proposal to have 2 joint events with UNW. It was well received in 2008 and we hope to grow on it.

Bill Brandt

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From My Corner of the Bench

Marc Connelly

We all view our racing through our own personal perspectives. That is a given, I suppose. If you race for the season, each race means something a little different then it does to the 'five race a season' guy. Some of us race for the sake of the race, others race for just the fun of tinkering with the boat endlessly. Some are scale hydro folks, like me. Others don't care so much about the historical or scale elements. I think about this a lot before I write about my quirky racing experiences. Maybe my weird year has nothing to do with yours. Maybe it did. Just maybe the reasons why I enjoy racing have little in common with yours. This is fun time so whatever makes it fun for you, works for me. Still, I scratch for a little common ground as I sit here typing.

2008 was a great racing year for me in many ways. It is pretty easy to count my blessings. I enjoyed a few more races with Roger, which I am especially thankful for now. I spent a lot more time with the Brandts this last year and it felt like I bonded into their tribe quite a bit over ten races. I can't say enough about how great that was. I made it to ten races in all, which aint bad. And, not to overlook what has been there for me since the first race, I enjoyed a lot of great Gary time, Chet time, Jim time, Harry time, Randy time and so on. In other words, the friendship and the fellowship of racing was probably the real highlight for me this past season. I continue to be amazed that, with only one minor exception, I just love everybody*.

One could say my racing luck sucked this year. But it didn't. Not really. I made all of my luck- every bit of it- and a lot of it was on purpose! After the first race, I knew that I had to switch boats, so my racing goals totally changed. I took a play out of the old Scott Meyers playbook and just shut up about most of what I was doing, but really, I was just playing with systems ideas for most of the year. Submersible fuel pumps, onboard ignition systems, a bunch of crazy fuel injection experiments, a radical and ultimately expensive engine build (which I will have to tell you about at some point) - all were a part of my racing in 2008. I suppose that it is a good thing that I didn't talk much as a lot of these brainstorm have been shelved permanently. But some stuck. Still, I was a bit surprised that nobody noticed when a battery pack broke loose and beat its way through the floorboards in Granger. Yep, I had a ton of fun messing with my brainstorm this year while tracking down some ancient gremlins in the back up Notre Dame hull. By my last race I had pretty much retreated to a 'stock' configuration and had all of the sponson demons banished (thanks to Gary). The boat was going pretty good until my racing budget rug got pulled, just before the Gold Cup.

Missing the 2008 Gold Cup is what seems surreal to me now. I just don't miss the damn Gold Cup. Not me. No way! After the Marysville race, we received word that Mary may- probably would be- be laid off from her job of 17 years. (still up in the air, to be determined in another day or two, doesn't look great, please keep your fingers crossed) So at our household, emergency budget planning went into immediate effect and among the first casualties was my precious Gold Cup. After Marysville, my already shaky racing budget just moved right back over to savings. I has only been within the past few weeks that I began to see even an unlikely path to my 2009 racing season. Helping me make a case are some positives; I have 10 gallons of 50% fuel in the closet, 22 glow plugs in my tool box, a current and valid R/CU registration, and my APBA has membership been paid for next year. A couple of props and a little luck on the price of gasoline and hey, 2009 may a terrific year after all!

After missing the Gold Cup, (congrats to David Newton!) I had to get a few more laps in before stripping the hull for components headed towards my 82 Atlas program. The cold fall air and the emerald green hue of Black Lake made for a splendid afternoon of running the boat, just one more time. Nobody called the local authorities and so I ran five times in two hours. It was one of those test sessions where nothing was accomplished, nothing tested. I just ran laps, enjoying the sight of floating through some hard turns, flying the hull down the front straights. When you are all alone on the water, it is fun to listen for the roostertail splatting back onto the lake surface two seconds after you blast by. As always happens in these private test sessions, I am reminded of the other reason why I am driven back to the race course again and again: I love to drive the boat. It never gets old, never is boring. I just love driving the boat.

Out there on 'Big Black', I also realized that I love driving a roundnose boat. This being the finer distinction, I should elaborate. Though I have come a long ways towards the Gary Jensen point of view over the years ("Roundnose or pickle- the water doesn't care! It doesn't matter!"), I have enough laps on the new Atlas to believe that the two sub species of *Hydroplaneous Maximus* do drive somewhat differently. For one thing, I am not constantly monitoring the pitch attitude with the Atlas. After only as few laps, I got used to the possibility that the nose is not going to peel off the water, Bluebird style. With the Carbon Knife, set up for maximum go fast, it is a constant vigil. Once she pitches up three degrees, you may be a goner. The '82 Atlas laughs at me when I try to set the hook ("Just floor it and turn right, you moron!"). The Karelson hulls reward good hook set timing with a smooth turning arc and a clean, fast turn and reward poor hook set timing with something far less attractive. I can't get the same 'land speed record' feeling down the chutes with my Atlas. So far, there is still a drag wall holding it back. Racing my Notre Dame is like flying a tail dragger airplane- its own reward. Like jabbing the wheel of an Offenhauser powered, front engine roadster at the dawn off rear engaged indy cars, there is a certain nobility- and fraternity- among those who stick to the old paradigm. That's what I think, anyway. That notion probably sounds insane to everyone who cannot fathom racing a roundnose boat, but there you go. It isn't for everybody. Whatever else I race in the future, I hope to also run a roundnose for as long as I race. And I hope that is many more laps yet.

Marc

My Corner of the Bench cont.



Do you remember these?

No Two
Boats
Are
Alike

* An old family expression: when my stodgy little old aunt had just one little sip too many at a Thanksgiving or the Fourth of July family event, she invariably blurted out "I just love everybody!" in a fit of amorous enthusiasm, no matter the question or comment directed her way. Hence, the expression is used here in the spirit of goodwill to all.

Larry Oberto Says Hummmmmmmmm,,,,,

Not sure anything too big or exiting going on.

The race team back in Madison are doing basic maintenance on the boat and focusing our efforts on the go fast bits that will keep us competitive.

Oberto is glad to be sponsoring such a dy-

namic group of R/C racers who keep the passion for the sport going at all levels. The words I got back from the banquet were that it was a fun and well attended event. I look forward to seeing you all sometime this season.

Best wishes and hope everyone has a good new year.

Larry.

An Overview of the Sport

by Don Mock

Radio Controlled Unlimited Hydros - What Are They?

Welcome to the exciting world of 1/8th scale unlimited hydroplanes. Capable of speeds in excess of 60 MPH, these models are exact

replicas of the fastest and most spectacular race boats in the world. They are nearly four feet long, two feet wide and weigh between ten and twenty pounds. Hundreds of boats participate in races sponsored by clubs in the U.S. and Canada. Here in the Northwest, R/C Unlimiteds (R/CU),

formed in 1974, was the first club of it's kind in the country devoted strictly to 1/8th scale unlimited hydroplanes. The club, which is affiliated with the American Power Boat Association and sponsored by Oberto, has over 100 members participating in a fourteen race circuit throughout the

Northwest.

No Two Alike

Club members pay \$10

to join and register a hydro. The club maintains a "[Master Hull Roster](#)" listing every unlimited hydroplane going back to the 1940's. Because there have been hundreds of different boats during this period, the club

only allows one model of each "real" boat to compete. This rule insures that each racer can run his or her "own" boat and reduces the possibility of confusion on the race course. When a new unlimited hits the wa-



ter, members can enter a drawing for the "rights" to build a model of that boat. The hydros are built from wood, fiberglass or even new "aircraft composite" materials, such as kevlar,

Boats lined up at "The Gold Cup"

graphite, and honeycomb. Although wood kits are available in hobby stores, many modelers choose to scratch build their boats from scale plans of the actual hydroplanes. Designers, such as [Newton Marine](#) offer plans for boats from the early 50's to the latest high-tech hydros of today.

Labor of Love

No matter what method is used to build the hull, all boats require long hours of the modelers time to complete construction, hardware, radio installation, and painting and detailing. The easiest and probably cheapest way to enter the

Designers, such as

[Newton](#)

[Marine](#) offer

plans for

boats

sport is to buy a "[used](#)" boat. Many modelers sell their boats, as they enjoy the challenge of building new ones. Prices range from as low as \$200 for a bare hull to over \$1,000 for a "ready to race" boat. Some modelers have invested as much as \$2,500 in their craft.

Radios

The boats are controlled by a radio with two channels; one for the throttle and another for the rudder. Some modelers use additional

channels to control flaps and fuel mixture. A receiver, mounted in the boat, controls the drive motors or "servos," which are connected by linkage rods to the rudder and engine. The servos and receiver are powered by an on-board battery. There are over 20 transmitting fre-

quencies allotted for the operation of R/C model boats. Hydros on the same frequency do not race at the same time. When boats on the same frequency end up in the same consolation or final heat, the one with the least amount of accumulated points must change frequencies by re-

placing the small "crystals" in both the receiver and transmitter.

Details Really Count

The boats are painted with the same epoxy and/or polyurethane paints used on the "big" boats. Paint schemes are determined through detailed inspection of photographs. Our local boaters have the



advantage of being able to visit the homes of many actual unlimiteds.

Engines

A closer look into the engine compartment reveals a .67 cubic inch (11cc), two-cycle, water cooled engine designed specifically for these models. The cooling water enters through a pick-up at the rear of the hull. All boats require an exotic exhaust system designed to keep noise down and horsepower up. The fuel used in the boats is a mixture of nitromethane, methanol and lubricants. Racing fuel can contain as much as 65% nitromethane and costs over \$25 a gallon. A racer will normally use nearly a gallon in a day of racing.



Duplicating the Real Thing

The credo of R/C Unlimiteds is "To duplicate the sport of Unlimited Hydroplane racing as closely as possible" in 1/8th scale. Because there are many spectators at R/CU events, the modelers try to build their boats with as much detail as possible. Details, such as "correct" driver's uniforms, helmets, steering wheels, and dashboards, add to the realism. Racing follows much the same format as the real unlimiteds. There is a 3 minute "preliminary" time for the boats to get on the water and running. At the end of that time, they attempt to be at the starting line, full throttle, for an exciting "flying start." Too early and you get a one-lap penalty. Too late and you've already lost. The only difference between these boats and the actual unlimiteds is that the models travel clockwise around the course. A race is run with "flights" of five or six boat preliminary heats where the boaters accumulate points to determine who gets to run in the "winner-take-all" final. The course is a little larger than a football field, and the boats travel approximately one mile in less than 90 seconds during a five-lap heat.

No Small Thrill

Even though these hydros are small and driven from the shore, the excitement for the drivers can be as great as for the big unlimited drivers. The winner of an R/C Unlimiteds race has just as much of a thrill as Steve David or Dave Villwock have when they win on the full-sized circuit.

Marty Shallenberger Accepts New Post



Marty shows off the beautiful Oberto at the 2006 RCU Gold Cup.

Chris Denslow Photo

Our own Marty has taken on the position of NAMBA Scale Unlimited Chairman taking over for Mike McKnight.

Marty has agreed to assume this monumental task, notes Al Waters.

Congratulations Marty, we in RCU are proud to support you in this new venture.

Articles Invited

If you have something to share in the newsletter I would love to hear from you.

I haven't had anyone step forward to champion a hard copy of the newsletter but I keep hoping that there is a person or persons that may want to.

I think there is still enough

interest to at least get it up on the site or email for that matter. Chet is going to try and maintain a good email list and I'm sure Jeff is willing to set up a simple tab on the site so we can keep our individual information updated.

Don't forget we have a January board meeting scheduled. We will get it updated on the site

as we get closer.

NAMBA Nationals July 11-18 2009

NAMBA Nats are coming to Marysville in 2009



Yes sir ree Bob we are gonna have the biggest race this side of the Pecos right in our own backyard this coming summer. If you have never had the opportunity to be involved in this type of event, trust me, DON'T MISS OUT!

The Brandt's plan to be there in force for the entire week of July 11-18. Please come and kick around with us and if you are asked to assist please show that RCU wants to step up and help.

Recognizing how important this event will be in our own Northwest, we have made an

effort to schedule our RCU racing around this so that you don't have to feel torn between the Nats and a club race.