

Regatta Review

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Well, we have another issue in 2005 after all. First, the good news...

HAPPY HYDRO HOLIDAYS - DRRA TICKET DISCOUNTS

Besides new lower prices for some areas including Waterworks Park, Santa and his helpers are busy getting stocking stuffers ready for the hydro lover in your family. Get a 15% discount on Reserved Seating if you order before December 31st, or 10% off if you order by March 31st.

THE UNLIMITED LIGHTS WILL RETURN IN 2006!

By popular demand, the automotive-powered Unlimited Light Hydroplanes will be chasing the historic O.J. Mulford Silver Cup. Loud, fast, and unpredictable, Unlimited Lights are crowd favorites wherever they race. This year, the Unlimited Light Hydroplane Racing Association is supporting the Lupus Alliance with the Lights for Lupus campaign. Nautical Mile Association members will be sponsoring the Unlimited Lights and local displays beginning in July.

Completing the program in exhibitions will be a large contingent of vintage race boats, and the wild-riding Jersey Speed Skiffs. Vintage boats, lovingly restored representatives of the sport's early years, draw oohs and aahs from admirers. Skiffs may look like something out of the past, but the hulls are made of fiberglass and feature finely tuned engines. They bounce, twist, and leap their way around the racecourse as fearless drivers and white-knuckle riding mechanics chase the checkered flag.

CLASSIC VINTAGE HYDROPLANES RETURN TO DETROIT

The 1982 APBA Gold Cup featured a thrilling duel between veteran driver Dean Chenoweth in Miss Budweiser and rising star Chip Hanauer at the wheel of Atlas Van Lines. Hanauer emerged victorious following a deck-to-deck battle. The two Classic Thunderboats will be on hand in 2006 to re-enact the contest; Hanauer will be in the Atlas cockpit. This event will benefit Children's Hospital.

MISS ELAM PLUS OFFERS MATCH RACE TO MISS BUDWEISER

The 2005 World Champion Miss Elam Plus is offering the 2004 World Champion Miss Budweiser a match race. To be held on Lake Washington in June if they take the challenge. The format would be the best 3 out of 5 and a \$400,000.00 cash prize winner take all. The single largest purse in recent years. After years of both teams being restricted this would be a chance for both teams to race heads up. ... Erick Ellstrom

COOPER SR. DIES, WAS 'TEDDY BEAR' OF HYDRO PITS

By Gordon Engelhardt - Courier & Press staff writer

Ed Cooper Sr., who formed a special unlimited hydroplane father-and-son partnership with Ed Jr., died on Tuesday at King's Daughters' Hospital in Madison, Ind. He was 86.

"Ed Sr. was sort of the teddy bear of the Cooper pits," said Thunder on the Ohio race chairman Tom Sawyer. "Everybody liked him. Although he hasn't acted as an active crew member (of the U-3) turning wrenches the last five or 10 years, he was always in the pits. He was sort of the social director of Ed's truck.

"He was just a super nice guy. He goes way back in racing. Everybody respects Ed Cooper Sr. He was just a great guy."

In a sport dominated by Lycoming turbine engines, Ed Cooper Jr. and Ed Cooper Sr. founded the U-3 Allison V-12 piston-powered racing team in 1985 in Evansville. Ed Sr. joined his son on the crew of the Miss Madison for several years and was also a former board member of the Madison Regatta. Driven by Mitch Evans, the U-3 won four races, including Thunder on the Ohio in 2003. It became the first piston-powered team to win the prestigious Gold Cup in more than 20 years at Detroit in 2003. The U-3 team became the first to turn a lap at more than 160 mph with an internal combustion engine in 2002.

"They stayed with the piston engine forever," Sawyer said. "Ed Cooper Jr.'s operation was sort of the Allison parts depot for the United States. They both were Allison engine experts.

"They refined the motor to where it produced more horsepower and was more dependable than it has ever been. When they got a new hull three years ago, they became competitive with the turbines."

Services are at 2 p.m. EST Friday at Vail-Holt Funeral Home Madison Chapel in Madison. Visitation is from noon until service time.

ED COOPER, SR., REMEMBERED

By Fred Farley - ABRA Unlimited Historian

Ed Cooper, Sr., who co-owned the U-3 Racing Team with his son, Ed Cooper, Jr., passed away on December 13, 2005, at King's Daughters' Hospital in Madison, Indiana. He was 86.

In a category dominated by Lycoming turbine engines, the father- and-son team was unique. They used the time-honored Allison V-12 piston power plant, originally intended for use in World War II fighter planes.

The Coopers started their racing careers in the 1960s as crew members for the community-owned MISS MADISON. In 2002, the U-3 team became the first to turn a lap at over 160 miles per hour with an internal combustion engine.

U-3 Team victories include:

- (1) 1989 - Tri-Cities, WA (Columbia Cup); driver-Mitch Evans
- (2) 2003 - Evansville, IN (Thunder On The Ohio); driver-Mitch Evans
- (3) 2003 - Detroit, MI (APBA Gold Cup); driver-Mitch Evans
- (4) 2003 - San Diego, CA (Bill Muncey Cup); driver-Mitch Evans

The elder Mr. Cooper served on the board of directors of Madison Regatta, Inc., in the 1970s. In the early 1980s, he and Ed, Jr., helped on the crew of MISS KENTUCKIANA PAVING, owned by Graham Heath and Bill Cantrell of Madison.

In 1985, the father and son pooled their resources and started their own team. They purchased Chuck Hickling's former TEMPUS, which they debuted in 1986. They built new boats in 1988, 1997, and 2002.

The Cooper team's supreme achievement has to be the 2003 Gold Cup at Detroit. They were the first piston-powered winners in twenty years of APBA racing's Crown Jewel.

Running under the sponsorship of FOX HILLS CHRYSLER-JEEP/SUN COATINGS, the U-3 and driver Mitch Evans defeated the defending Gold Cup champions Dave Villwock and MISS BUDWEISER in the Final Heat, 144.152 miles per hour to 141.488.

Ed Cooper, Sr., was a great friend and admirer of the late Bill "Pappy" Cantrell who, together with Graham Heath, taught the Coopers everything they knew about the Allison engine.

In an interview with this writer, Ed, Sr., revealed his greatest thrill in racing. That was the time when he tested the former TEMPUS hull on the Ohio River: "I always admired 'Pappy' Cantrell and wanted to be like him. That time when I drove the boat, I felt like I really was 'Pappy' Cantrell."

FROM THE DRRA

The DRRA and it's members would like to extend our deepest sympathies to Ed Cooper Jr. and family, our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this difficult time.

You may visit online to leave a tribute to Ed Sr.: <http://tinyurl.com/cph8f>

- Brian Reed - DRRA Volunteer