CELEBRATING 57 YEARS

DECEMBER 2026

UNLIMITEDS DETROIT

Thunderboat

Happy Holidays!

from

Unlimiteds Detroit

Inside

Celebrating Fred Alter's 100th birthday



VANESSA & DARRELL STRONG

ANNOUNCE RETIREMENT FROM HYDROPLANE RACING



MARK YOUR CALENDARS! UD's annual **Holiday Party** is ON! **SATURDAY**, **December 12th**, 2026 at

TOTAL SPORTS Complex in Harrison Township

Hey Gang, it's the

HOLIDAY PARTY AND AUCTION

Live Auction
Awards
Pizza

This year the annual **UD Holiday Party and Auction** will be held at the Total Sports Complex in Harrison Township On SATURDAY afternoon, December 12, 2026. Come around 1:00 pm and **stay!**

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here it is gang...

2027

UD

Color Calendar



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HYDRO TOUR

NOTE: The Hydro Tour race, scheduled for October 23-25 at Miami's Marine Stadium has apparently been postrponed until sometime in the Spring of 2027.

www.unlimitedsdetroit.com

DECEMBER 2026

Thunderboat

The only print source left standing for Unlimited Hydroplane coverage, history and news

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2026: the year in review

It's time for a year-end look back at the 2026 Unlimited hydroplane season. What we were promised was a very competitive field regardless of the fact that H1 had only nine registered boats, and only six were pledged at every race.

Then there was the reality of a four-race schedule after Guntersville dropped out and Detroit was only $750,000 short of coming back.

But, the season actually turned out fine, with plenty of surprises.

Jimmy Shane returned after a four-year absence, to add more strength to an already strong drivers' pool. He won two races and was in the hunt for the drivers' championship all year.

Miss FLAV-R-PAC and driver Jamie Nilsen got better and better at every race, dueling with and often beating the favorites.

Likewise, the Stocklins' *Bucket List Racing* U-40 and new driver Dylan Runne stepped up and leveled the playing field with some speedy performances.

Darrell Strong's two-boat team – *Maverick* and *Tahoe Miss* - had a rocky start, but proved their mettle in San Diego, winning heats and finishing second and third in the Finals before announcing their retirement from racing.

The resurrected *Miss Madison* team actually went West and raced in Tri-Cities and Seattle, keeping a 65-year-old tradition alive.

And, best of all, Bruce Ratchford's BWR two-boat team dominated. Andrew Tate's U-1 and Jimmy Shane's U-27 appeared to be just one step ahead, even with the strong showings of their competitors.

Only drawback to the 2026 Unlimited season was the shortened, four-race circuit. It's no secret that the Unlimited hydroplanes are the most beautiful and spectacular form of motor sport. Even champion Formula One driver Michael Schumacher once said so. They are in need of more exposure to showcase what they have.

H1 is in the process of locating more race sites. And, if a national sponsor or two would step up to the plate, it's possible that the next golden era of Gold Cup boat racing may be in the very near future!

- Steve Garey

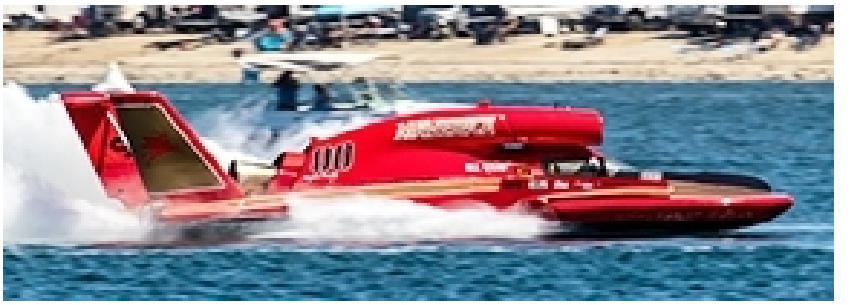
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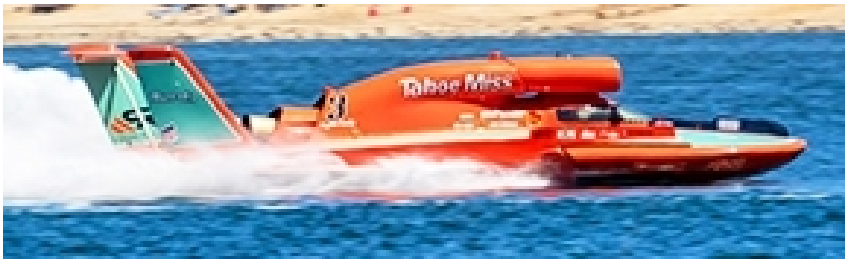
Around the Boats

News & Rumors
from the exciting world
of hydroplane racing

STRONG RACING TEAM RETIRES







Robert F Peters photos

Vanessa and Darrell Strong take their final bow after 13 years in boat racing.Strong Racing owners retire with 14 victories, three Gold Cups and a lasting connection to the racing community.

Race Day Live said: After years of dedication, passion, and support for unlimited hydroplane racing, Darrell and Vanessa Strong have announced their retirement from H1 Unlimited team ownership and sponsorship.Their contributions to the sport and commitment to the racing community have been an important part of the H1 Unlimited landscape. As they step away from the sport, the racing community extends its appreciation for their support and wishes them all the best in their next chapter.Thank you, Darrell and Vanessa, for being part of Unlimited Hydroplane racing!

KoolKat Motorsports said: A Class Act and a tremendous sponsor of hydroplane racing in all category's, wish you all the best, you guys will be missed!

Laurie Kelly said: So many great memories with Strong Racing Crew Strong Racing Darrell Strong and Vanessa Strong.

Brent Hall said: I want to send a big thank you to Darrell and Vanessa Strong for all you have done for boat racing over the years. Only some got to see up close to understand how much effort you put in to keep our sport going.



Go3 Racing Team

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2026 Final Season Standings

U-1 *BWR Racing*	Andrew Tate	6649
U-27 *Miss Apollo*	Jimmy Shane	6134
U-3 *Tahoe Miss*	Corey Peabody	5156
U-00 *Maverick*	J Michael Kelly	4947
U-11 *Miss Flav-R-Pac*	Jamie Nilsen	3881
U-40 *Bucket List Racing*	Dylan Runne	3748
U-6 *Royer Miss Madison*	Brandon Kennedy	2536
U-12 *Graham Trucking*	Jeff Bernard	1788
U-21 *Beacon/KZOK*	Gunnar O'Farrell	899

2026 H1 Unlimited Race Results

July 3-5, Madison, IN **APBA Gold Cup**

winner: U-27 ***Miss Apollo***, Jimmy Shane

July 24-26 Tri-Cities, WA Apollo Columbia Cup

winner: U-27 ***Miss Apollo***, Jimmy Shane

July 31-Aug. 2 Seattle, WA Seafair Trophy Race

winner: U-1 ***BWR Racing***, Andrew Tate

Sept. 18-20 San Diego, CA Bayfair Bill Muncey Cup

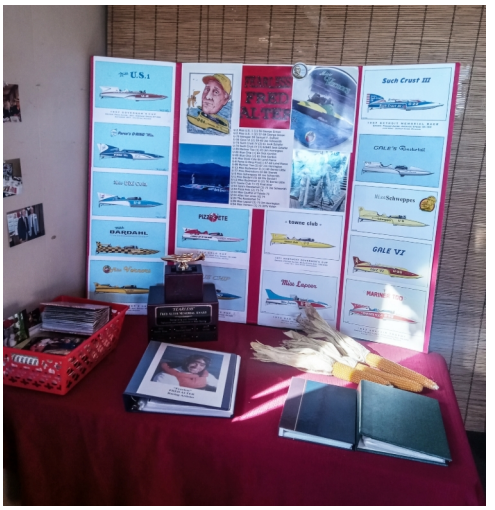
winner: U-1 ***BWR Racing***, Andrew Tate

Fearless Fred Alter's 100th birthday





Fred became an owner in 1971 when he purchased the **Miss Schweppes** from Joe Schoenith and secured **Towne Club Beverages** as a a sponsor.



One of the posterboards showing some of the many great Unlimiteds that Fred drove during his career.

The life of boat racer Fred Alter was celebrated at the home of Peggy Kennard on October 18th, on what would have been Fred's 100th birthday. Fred passed away in 2021.

Nicknamed the "Fearless One", Fred raced Unlimited hydros for 20 years, beginning in 1955 driving Bill Stroh's *Miss Detroit*. From there, he went of to drive more Unlimiteds (19) than anyone, and winning four major regattas before retiring in 1975.

He later served as commissioner of the Unlimited Racing Commission, taking the sport international with a World Championship race in Acapulco, Mexico.

Fred's most recent project was the vintage *Miss Vernors*, constructed from his "kit boat" concept, which he developed in the late 70's to upgrade the Unlimited fleet.

On display at Fred's 100th Birthday celebration were posterboards and photo albums filled with memories from his life and career.



Fred and Peggy in 2008

A day in the life...



Fierce action at the '71 Gold Cup race in Madison ,Indiana. Dueling with Billy Schumacher in **Pride of Pay'n Pak**, Fred's **Towne Club** hit a huge roller in the first turn and hooked, tearing off the rear cowl and tail fin. Undaunted, he went on to finish fifth in the race.



Fred's 100th Birthday cake

President's Note

We won't bombard you with advertisements. We won't hang a flyer on your front door. We won't drive down your street with a bullhorn mounted on the roof of a car. But we do ask you to attend the November meeting and vote in the Unlimiteds Detroit election. The meeting is on November 19th at 7:30 pm at the National Coney in Warren.

When you come to the meeting, bring unlimited hydroplane memorabilia to donate for the December Holiday party/auction. We received quite a few items at the October meeting but we can always use more. I know somebody out there has a phony pink Gale button! This is a major fundraiser for the club so your donations help the club.

The Board has been discussing two very important elements related to THUNDERBOAT. As you know, Steve Garey has been the editor of the newsletter for over 50 years! We also know that Steve does an incredible job of finding content for each issue. Steve has indicated he will continue as editor and that he's not close to midnite yet. Although he doesn't have an end date, the club has to recruit assistant editors and provide assistance in the production and distribution functions.

The other element is the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter. Our current subscription fees do not cover the costs of printing and mailing. Every month we have to make sure our mail quantity is above 200 otherwise the mailing expense will be much higher. We have looked at increases in membership fees but that could result in losing members.

At the next meeting, additional details will be provided and we will seek member input.

Club info & minutes of the meeting...

UNLIMITEDS DETROIT

MINUTES OF MEETING

October 29th, 2026

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of Unlimiteds Detroit was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by President Richard Rose.

MINUTES - The minutes of four past meetings have not been read or approved, due to the absence of Karl Schwarzwalder, the club Secretary, and also a couple of guest speakers. Those minutes were from March 26th, May 28th, June 25th, and August 27th. The minutes of the September meeting were approved with one correction/addition. Nancy Spanich donated the money from winning the 50/50 raffle back to the club. Judy Roberts made a motion to approve all the minutes mentioned above, this was seconded by Garl Clement.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Nancy Spanich reported that the club had deposits of $523.00 and disbursements of $1,782.65. Nancy has bank statements available if any club members would like to review them.

MEMBERSHIP - Jim Piteo reported that we currently have 192 members. We have 187 USA members, and 5 Canadian. New members are Stephen Bartlett of Goodyear, AZ; Scott and Anthony Hope of Windsor, Ontario; David Johnson of Happy Valley, OR; and Bob Senior of Everett, WA. Jim reminded everyone to sign the signature sheet. Only members that have attended 3 or more meetings during the year are eligible to vote. We had several new faces at the meeting, and Jim asked for introductions around the room. We had two guests attending that were interested in joining the club.

MARKETING - John Bridge reported that the calendar is nearing completion. He hopes to have it by the end of November, to sell at the Holiday Party.

THUNDERBOAT - Steve Garey put together another great issue, as always. Steve announced that he would like to retire and transition out of publishing the Thunderboat. He has doing it for over 50 years. He is hoping someone will step up for the position.

HEALTH AND WELFARE - The meeting was being live streamed. Members were informed that Hank Kosciuszko was watching the meeting. There was a loud round of applause for Hank.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS - It is once again time for the nomination of Officers and Members at Large. The election will take place at the November meeting. The November meeting will be moved to one week earlier, due to Thanksgiving. We will meet on (Thursday) November 19th in the main part of the restaurant. Nominations are as follows:

President: Richard RoseVP/Treasurer: Nancy SpanichVP/Member Relations: Jim PiteoVP/Marketing: John Bridge and Richard ColeSecretary: No nominationsMembers at Large: Duane Michno, Tony Zaremski, Ed Krupinski, Dan Demsy, and Robert Hall

Steve Mahac made a motion to close nominations for this month, seconded by Tony Zaremski. Nominations will re-open at next month's meeting, prior to voting.

Ray Dong is dissatisfied with our current meeting room at the National Coney Island. He feels it is not conducive to conducting a business meeting. Several members had thoughts on alternative locations and will look into them. They were asked to inquire about possible charges for the room, and if there were any minimum ordering requirements (if it is held at a restaurant). Need to keep the location central and easy to get to.

- minutes continued on next page -

Next meeting: will be at the **National Coney Island**, 30140 Van Dyke Ave., Warren, MI 48093, across from the GM Tech Center, on Thursday, **November 19th, 2026.** at 7:30 pm. *See you there!*

As a reminder, the Marine Prop Riders are having their annual Awards Banquet on November 14th at Villa Penna. It starts at 5:00 p.m., dinner at 6:00 p.m. U-D Members are invited, please contact Mario Maraldo for details. Cost is $50 per person. Raffle baskets are welcome and encouraged.

Per an email communication to some of our officers, Tom McInnes is still working on having a race in Detroit in 2027. He is making up sponsorship packets. He has several verbal commitments for sponsorship, but no title sponsor yet. Estimated cost to put on a race is $500,000 to $700,00. He has a commitment from a crane company. The DYC and the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club have offered to hold fundraisers. They plan to include 5-Litre and Grand Prix classes.

50/50 RAFFLE - $41.00 went to John Feola. We also had 3 Detroit Lions posters to raffle off.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,Linda Mahac



ATTENTION BOAT RACING COMMUNITY: As much as it pains me to post this and due to an unexpected life event, The GP24-The Kraken may be available. If you are serious about boat racing, you know the hull and how fast it's potential is. I believe it's still the mile and a quarter APBA record holder. It's also one of the strongest hulls in the fleet and has been fully maintained race ready during it's time with me. Please serious inquiries only and if interested....message me! If it does not sell I will continue to race when I can. Great chance for a strong, fast, historic hull!

Radio Controlled Unlimiteds!

2026 Spencer Park and beyond



Unlimited driver Jimmy King and an R/C model of **Miss Exide**, the team he drove for in his rookie season at the APBA Gold Cup in Detroit.

Garl Clement photos







Be sure to visit the
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www.unlimitedsdetroit.com



Detroit 2011 *Hank Kosciuszko photo*

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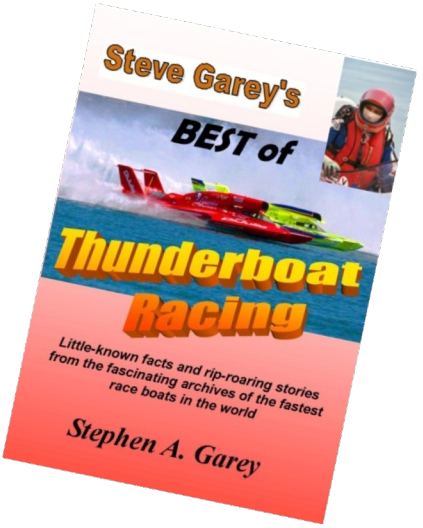


Three cool dudes! Hanging out at the Gold Cup race in Madison are Ray Dong, Andrew Tate and Randy Rowe. *Steve Garey photo*

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Judy Stroh Roberts photo