



# final moorings

BY GERRY YARRISH

## Roger Newton—the man and his mission

**W**hen scale modeling, speed and racing collide, an 1/8-scale hydro modeler is sure to be found at the impact site. It's in 1/8-scale unlimited hydro racing that most modeling skills come together and work in harmony. The racing involves 11cc glow-powered engines, new- and old-style hydro hull designs and skillful model builders and drivers—all in one exciting and colorful class. But where did it all start?

**Roger Newton of Renton, WA, can accurately be called the "father of 1/8-scale unlimited hydroplanes." He has a fire in his heart for hydros of all sizes.**

### The Man

It doesn't take long for a modeler who's interested in R/C unlimited 1/8-scale hydros to hear the name Roger Newton. Roger, a 27-year veteran firefighter from Renton, WA, considers himself the ultimate "hydro geek." Involved with these racers—both model and full-scale—for more than 30 years, Roger grew up on the shores of Lake Washington in Seattle. He remembers seeing hydros such as Slo-Mo's, Thriftways and Gale Boats battling for the gold every summer. As a boy, he built his share of tethered and free-running models of the local racers.

In the mid-'60s, Roger started building R/C models that we now recognize as 1/8-scale unlimited hydros. At the time, he never thought this class of model would become so popular.

In 1974, Roger and a group of his boating buddies formed a club called R/C Unlimiteds (RCU). Their goal was to duplicate in model form boats in the unlimited class of hydroplanes. From its

small beginning, the RCU has grown to more than 100 members, and the races typically have close to 50 R/C hydros entered. Roger takes great pride in the fact that a majority of these models have come from his plans. When RCU



**A great shot of the fully restored U-37 Slo-Mo-Shun V taken in 1993 at Lake Chelan in Eastern Washington. Roger had a chance to actually drive the hydro.**

started, there were no scale hydro kits available; that's why Roger started Newton Marine\*, a very successful hydro plans company.

### The Mission

Along with his love of unlimited hydros, Roger has a few years of drafting experience under his belt. Roger's plans catalogue includes more than 65 hull styles that can be used to make 430 unlimited hydro models. More plans are being added all the time, and Roger's photo



**A pair of Buds: Roger (left) and Miss Budweiser driver Tom D'Eath at the '90 San Diego hydro races.**



**This '94-'95 U-1 Miss Budweiser is Roger's latest model creation.**

documentation collection is one of the world's largest. Over the years, Roger has collected slides, negatives and photos of virtually every unlimited hydroplane ever built. Modelers and hydro enthusiasts from around the world recognize him as the hydro information source.

Roger has also been involved in full-size unlimited hydroplane racing and restoration. For the past 10 years, he has worked at the Unlimited Hydroplane Museum in Washington and has helped to restore the Slo-Mo-Shun IV and V

to running condition and helped to build a running replica of the Hawaii Kai III. Future projects include: the Miss Bardahl, the Hurricane IV, Savair's Probe, Bill Muncey's Atlas Van Lines and a replica of the Thriftway Too. He is also a volunteer crew member of Ken Muscatel's U-14 Super Racing Team and has actually driven the Slo-Mo-Shun V—a childhood dream come true!

Other projects Roger is involved in include making plugs for model fiberglass hulls for Class Glass\* and creating artwork for Mr. Perfect\* model hydro decals; both are attempts to help fellow modelers to build accurate scale unlimited hydroplanes. Roger is involved in so many aspects of unlimited hydroplane racing that he eats, drinks and sleeps hydros, with very little time for anything else. He looks forward to retiring from the Renton Fire Department so he can put out the fire in his hydro heart! Or should I say, "Feed the flames?"

\*Addresses are listed alphabetically in the Index of Manufacturers on page 82.