

River Rumours

MANAWATU POWER BOAT CLUB INC. NEWSLETTER

December 2011

R.I.P.

Power Boating unfortunately lost ones of its members on Sunday 27th November.

Roger Smith passed away after a battle with cancer and is survived by his wife Glynis and two sons Brent & Nick. His funeral was held at Waikanae on the 1st December.

Roger will be remembered for his competitive spirit. He raced a v bottom called Black Smith and a tunnel hull called Ron Barbado.

GP HYDROPLANE RACING AT TAUPO, LAKE KARAPIRO & MANGERE

This year the big events to see are being held at Taupo, Lake Karapiro & Mangere.

Acceleration on Water has arranged for the American . Marty Wolfe from the Johnson-Wolfe team to come and is shipping over his boat called Renegade to race in the AE Baker Cup to be held on Lake Taupo on January 28th & 29th.



Renegade

Then on the February 3rd & 5th at Lake Karapiro he will be up against another American . J Michael Kelly who will be piloting Peter Knight Snrs boat The Boss in the UIM World Grand Prix Hydroplane Championship.

Also competing in the 100th EC Griffith Cup at Lake Karapiro will be NZ's Annihilator team which now consists of 4 boats. And NZ's Scott Coker in Fair Warning.

Australian . Grant Harrison is bringing over his new boat GP1 to compete. UIM Worlds GP, 100th running of the Griffith Cup and onto Mangere for the 88th Masport Cup on the 3rd & 4th of March.

MEMBER PROFILE

Ross Knight

Levin local Ross Knight started racing in the mid 1960's.

He met and married Shirley in 1954 and together they had 8 children. Boy, Girl, Boy, Girl, Boy, Girl, Boy, Girl. Unfortunately two of the girls were lost at a young age due to illnesses.

Ross was a fitter & turner at the Power Board and then moved on to work at Kimberley Hospital in the 1970's. By the late 80's he was working at Ericsson Auto Electrical.

Ross's first boat was aptly named Shirley. It was a hydroplane with a Dodge straight 6. The next two boats were called Tempest, both hydroplanes the first with a Ford 272 and the second with a Chev.

The 4th boat to enter the family around 1974 was Hydrocat, powered by a Chev 327.



Balanced field of 13

About 80 boats are expected to attend the Manawatu Power Boat Club's DB Gold Cup regatta at Whirokino on Sunday. The feature race, the DB Gold Cup open championship, has attracted 13 entries, mostly from the Manawatu and Wellington clubs - champions and runner-up clubs respectively at the recent national championships. The field for this year's event looks the most evenly balanced seen for some time. Favourite at the stage, however, would be Manawatu's Matt Morrison with his renowned Avanti powered by a 454 Chevrolet engine. Morrison and Avanti were second in the DB Gold Cup last year and won the 'King of the River' event in Wanganui last Sunday. The line-up for the other final placings should be between Manawatu's Ross Knight in the hydroplane Hydrocat, Ivan Piro (Cambridge) in his runabout Allegro, Lionel Palmer (Wellington) with Min Puntal, and Manawatu's Dick Henn in The Gambler. Henn has recently won the North Island, South Island, and New Zealand E-class championships. Other possible finalists for Sunday could be Bruce Thomas (Wellington) with Infestation, and Graham Sharp (Manawatu) with Kivi Can. Both were finalists in last week's King of the River event. Three North Island titles will be at stake on Sunday. The Ss Class (unlimited size with carburetors) has attracted a capacity field: Avanti, Allegro, and The Gambler look favourite here. The E class (three-litre hydroplane) has also attracted a full field, with top contender shaping to be Fred Morris (Wakatipu) in Tempest, powered by a Ford V6 fuel injector motor. The third title is the T class (170cc restricted outboard) which should be a battle between Wellington clubmate Morris Sutherland in Copyright and Len Barlow in his new hull Quick Silver. Racing, which starts at 11 a.m., will feature handicap and scratch events. A women's race is also included in the programme. All varieties of rigs will be on show at Whirokino - 1200cc. Boards to unlimited specification, 85cc outboards to the unlimited, tunnels, hydro, and inboard and outboard runabouts.

The 5th boat was called Coolcat and had been brought into the country from Australia before Ross brought it from Des Strong's brother.



Ross Knight in Coolcat, Steve Hughes in Flyer.

The naming of Hydrocat and Coolcat.

The Knight boys had a kitten rescued from a timber mill and had named it Mills. This cat loved to sleep in the boat but one day Mills got the ride of her life.

'MILLS' GOES SPEEDBOAT RACING



by John Symon

Manawatu Speedboat driver Ross Knight does not normally take passengers when he races his 350 cubic inch 95 mph hydroplane Tempest. However Saturday, February 11th was a little different.

Ross left his Levin home about 7.00 a.m. and with the 5.5 metre Hydroplane, Tempest, on the trailer behind the car. His destination for the day was the Porirua Harbour where he was to contest amongst other events the North Island Unlimited Hydroplane Championship. Ross arrived at the pits about 8.00 a.m. and here the official Scrutineers checked Tempest over to make sure it was safe to race. Nothing was amiss and about 10.30 a.m. Ross was out on the water doing his qualifying time trial. After this Tempest was taken back to the pits where the oil was checked and the boat fueled up ready for the North Island Unlimited Hydroplane Championship which was Race Nine on the afternoons programme.

About 2.45 p.m. the ten boats were out on the water under the started control. Down the back straight conditions were fairly rough as the starter let the field go and they thundered into the first corner with Tempest in fourth place. However Christchurch driver, Peter Knight's boat, Datsun disintegrated in the corner and Knight in Tempest, was amongst several drivers who took evasive action before the officials stopped the race to clear the course. Once again the boats were in the starters hands and this time the remaining nine boats took off and Knight in Tempest drove a good race to come in, in second place behind Nelson driver Doug Cameron driving Miss Print IV. Once again Knight's boat was taken from the water and refuelled and about 4 p.m. Tempest was out on the water again in a handicap race. After this the boat was again taken into the pits where it was cleaned up prior to returning to Levin. Ross Knight was at the front of the boat when he saw crewman Chris Kennedy, standing wide eyed and open mouthed looking into the engine compartment. Fearing the worst (thinking of a damaged motor) Knight rushed round to have a look. Imagine his surprise to see his three year old cat "Mills" wet and bedraggled peering out from inside the hull beside the motor. Mills so named because he had been brought home from a timber mill only a few hours old, had been hand reared with an eyedropper by Ross's wife Shirley and has been with the Knights for three years. It seems that Mills must have climbed into the boat sometime on the Friday night and once the boat started moving became too frightened to move.

At times during the racing, Tempest would have been travelling at speeds in the vicinity of 150 kilometers an hour so Mills must surely qualify as the fastest cat on water in New Zealand if not in the world. The good part is that after being taken home and cleaned up Mills is none the worse for his ordeal and is quite content back at home.

Ross Knight in the meantime is having a hard time living down the incident and rumours have it that the new boat he has just purchased in conjunction with Chris Kennedy is to be named 'Hydro-Cat'.

Mills lived to a ripe old age of about 19 years!

The family enjoyed travelling around mainly the North Island to go boat racing.

Every year would see the whole family pile into a station wagon and head off for the Christmas circuit of Blue Lake, Ohope, & Lake Karapiro.

The Knight children would disappear soon after

arriving spending many a long summer up to who knows what in the sun!

The family would stay with friends in Rotorua and at Whakatane. The friends at Whakatane lived next to a Chinese takeaway. This was a favourite as they'd knock on the takeaway's window and get a pot full of food.

Ross's brother Bob also raced later getting the second Tempest boat. The Knight brothers didn't start crewing for their father until they were older. The oldest son Andrew was the only brother to be allowed to drive the boat. Ross & Bob's sister Yvonne drove in the ladies races.

Ross built his own engines and did most of the work on the boats. He was competitive against the likes of McGregors, Peter Knight snr, Lionel Palmer and Andy Hogg often unable to be seen following along in their rooster tails.

The Nationals were always held at Lake Karapiro and you had to qualify to attend. But National races were held over two heats and if you failed to qualify in your heat your National Title chances were over for the year.

Ross Knight was competitive and won 2nd place in the Manawatu Gold Cup in 1980. In Coolcat he won the North Island 6 litre Championship in 1983 & 1984 & the North Island unlimited Hydroplane in 1982 & 1983.

In Hydrocat he set a speed of 105.02 miles an hour. He never ran a kilo in Coolcat.



As mentioned the Knight Family travelled around most North Island venues and the Knight boys were not adverse to the odd spot of trouble making.

As Shirley remembers . racing at Ratapiko one year they were camping at Stratford and the brothers took it upon themselves to carry a sleeping Shirley out of the tent on her stretcher. They didn't get very far though as Ross opened one eye and told them to put her down.

At the Wairarapa the original club rooms had a control tower on the top and the Knight brothers would set up their stretchers in there. One weekend though after setting up they decided to head to the Lake Ferry Hotel for a drink or two. On arriving back at the river they found someone had dismantled their stretchers and re-assembled them in the rafters. So the Knight boys went downstairs and took the middle set of legs out of the offenders stretchers!

There used to be team racing. You wouldn't race your own boat. The idea was two boats would do a lap each and the last boat would do two laps. There was a boat called Nervous Tooq and Ross was out in it giving it heaps. Shirley said to Bob who's that out in that crazy boat. To which Bob replied that it was her husband.

An old boat racing rule was that you could slow down as soon as you'd gone over the finish line. One particular race two boats ahead of Ross did this and Ross swerving to avoid them went up onto the bank taking out the back of one outboard and swiping another boat. He came to a stop on the bank. It took a quite a few people to lift the boat as they backed the trailer under.



Ross was on the committee for the boat club for many years and also became a life member of the Levin Cosmopolitan Club.

After he finished racing he turned the entire back yard of his property in Aviaries. He kept parrots and breed and sold them. At various times he had a Cockatoo and a Galah.

The old rotary clothes line was in the middle of the aviaries and Shirley said she had to be careful where she hung clothes as they get caught on them.

The aviaries were surround by an electric fence which caught Bryan Denham by surprise and he ended up on his bottom after grabbing the gate one day.

Ross passed away in 2001 and the family presented the Ross Knight open hydroplane trophy to the club. This coming Gold Cup regatta will be the 10th time it has been competed for. Jamie Knight (Ross's son) won the trophy the first year driving Godfather

Jamie has won the trophy each time he had a boat to compete in. This year he is aiming for his 4th win.

MANAWATU BOAT IN CANADA

Many of you may have met Paul Russell when he was in NZ and came to the 40th Gold Cup in January.

Paul grew up in Palmerston North and his father raced with Trevor Thompson through the MPBC.

Paul now lives in Canada and has brought Miss Riff Raff from Bryan Cardiff. He races it in Division 10 vintage over the border in Washington State.

Paul has renamed the boat First Mate but keeps the kiwi decals and sponsorship on it. He hopes to one day bring it back to race here.

He modified it by dropping the bottom of the boat a little into the air trap to allow for a deeper

bottom pan and has fitted a new motor. The motor is a Honda F-20c (S-2000)



CHRISTMAS & NEW YEARS



Yes it's that crazy time of year again. Have fun, over indulge & do everything you shouldn't and we'll see you in the New Year . at Mangakino!

GOLD CUP SPONSORS

The club would like to thank the following sponsors of the 41st running of the Gold Cup

The Trust Community Foundation
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Ken Mason Auto Electrical
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Plumbing Solutions Ltd
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Paul Ireland Digger Hire
Kapiti Architectural Design Ltd
Stokes Valley Collision Repair Ltd
Tate Engineering
Kin Ross Trust

Plus those to be confirmed ÷ ÷

UPCOMING EVENTS

1st & 2nd January 2012

Mangakino

This event hosted by the Lakeland Power Boat Club is one of the most anticipated in the season.

This years feature events include:

North Island U/U
North Island Series 3000
Des Geddes Memorial

21st & 22nd January 2012

41st Manawatu Gold Cup

The most anticipated event of the season hosted by our very own club.

The schedule is huge:

North Island Formula 3 title
North Island Clubmans title
41st Gold Cup
60th Carl Augustine
10th Ross Knight open hydro
Sally Nagel Memorial
Bob Dunlop Memorial

A couple of reminders:

We need people on Friday the 20th to help setup.

And send your entries in sooner rather than later!

More next newsletter ÷ ÷ ÷

That's all for Now

Regards

Rochelle Dennis