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Satisfaction's the thing for Lostumbo, Lauterbach

Don Lostumbo gave up power boat racing once.

Don Lostumbo says he will never claim he gave up power boat racing twice.

"It is difficult to get out of your blood," said the 36-year-old Lostumbo, a look-alike for Avery Schreiber of the Burns and Schreiber comedy team.

Lostumbo stopped racing inboard hydroplanes and decided to take up flying. But after a year of flying he noticed something was missing. It all seemed so monotonous and lonely way up there where nobody could see him.

He prefers the intimacy of inboard hydroplane racing, where people know his mustachioed face and the boat he drives, The Happy Hooker.

"I retired only once from racing," says Lostumbo, who won both 7 litre classes Saturday and Sunday in the 37th annual Southland Sweepstakes Regatta on St. Petersburg's Lake Maggiore.

"PERSONAL SATISFACTION is a big part of power boat racing. The deeper you get into it the more difficult it is to put down. I tried flying for a year but there wasn't the same ego gratification that there is in power boat racing.

"Most of the people involved in racing do it just because they like to race. There's no money in this kind of racing. Satisfaction's the big thing."

Larry Lauterbach also gets a lot of satisfaction out of racing 7 litre boats. But it's a curious kind of satisfaction for the 27-year-old Lauterbach, of Portsmouth, Va.

In addition to racing boats, Lauterbach builds them. Of the more than 150 boats entered in the two-day Southland, Lauterbach estimates that he built as many as half of them.

Lauterbach was doubly pleased Sunday when he won the

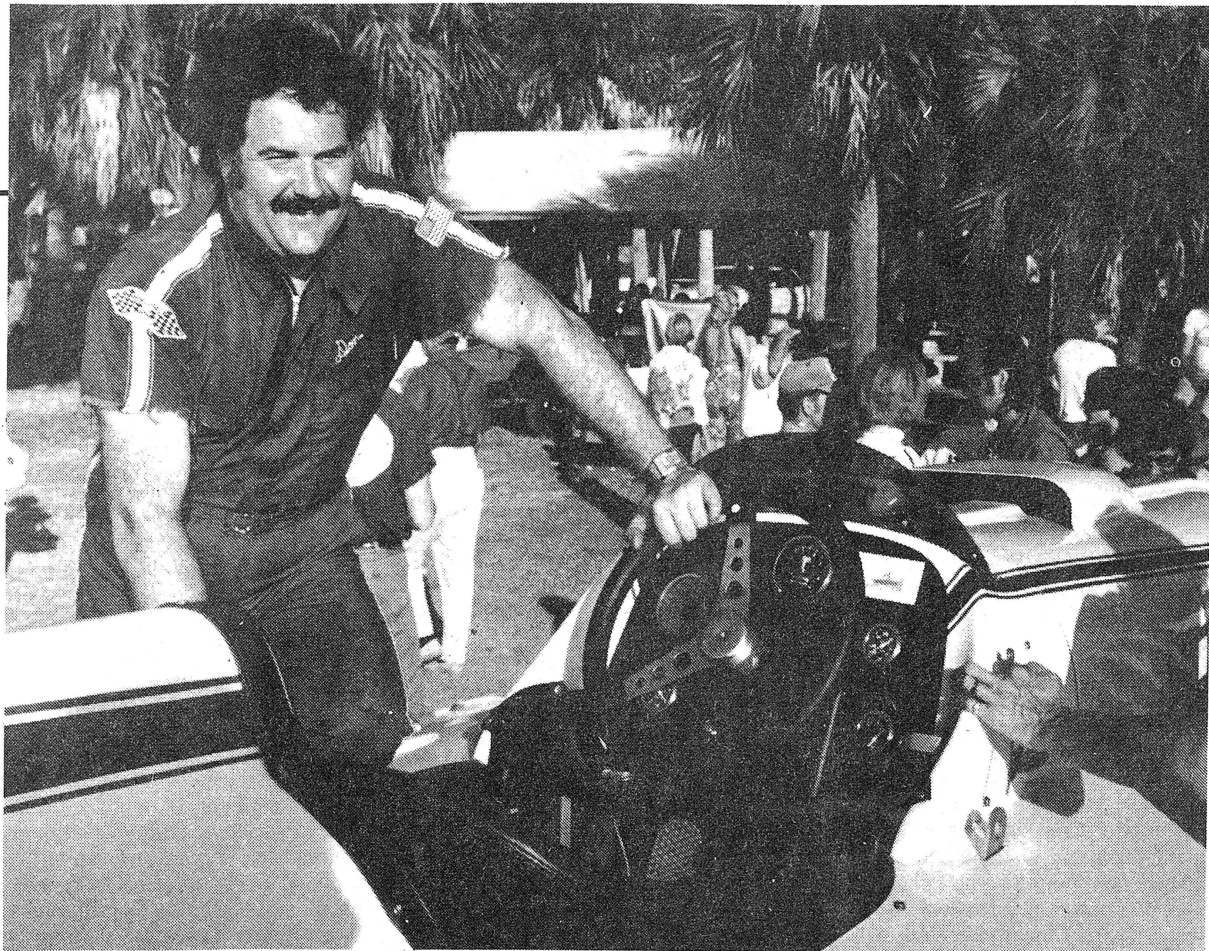
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- With little financial remuneration in powerboat racing, personal satisfaction is the major stimulation for most drivers.
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Southland Sweepstakes Invitational for the second straight year in his 7 litre division I Edelweiss and then looked over his shoulder and saw the next three boats in line were ones he had constructed.

"I don't own Edelweiss because it really wouldn't be too good for business," said Lauterbach, the 1974 national and eastern divisional champion in 7 litres. "If my customers saw me out there racing my own boat they would say that maybe I'm giving myself the best equipment and holding back on them."

LAUTERBACH is one of only two major inboard hydroplane builders in the country and he left St. Petersburg satisfied with a victory in the Southland Invitational but disappointed he didn't win division II (for stock engines) and set a world record in the process Saturday.





St. Petersburg Times photo by Jackie Greene

Ex-flier Don Lostumbo boards 'The Happy Hooker'

"World records are tough to come by, but if there's going to be one set it will probably come on this course," said Lauterbach.

Edelweiss and most of the top boats in the 7 litre division II class ran into engine problems Saturday, but even if they hadn't had those problems with engines they would have had a bigger one with Lostumbo and Happy Hooker.

Lostumbo ran away with both heats in division II Saturday and finished first and third in division I heats Sunday for the overall title, won in 1974 by Lauterbach.

"I guess we had some gremlins helping us out and a couple of those boats broke down," said Lostumbo, who used a stock engine Sunday and gave up anywhere from 200 to 400 horsepower and 20 miles per hour to boats with modified engines.

"We haven't had real good luck with the engine lately. We blew a head gasket and ended up finishing third overall in

Miami last weekend so it was nice to have the engine run this well for a change."

LOSTUMBO is a transportation consultant for a trucking firm in Hillsdale, N.J., where he lives but he got enough time off from work last season to win the 7 litre high point championship.

This season, he'll probably go for it again while Lauterbach, who can't take that much time away from his boat building to shoot for the points championship, will again go for the one race which determines the national champion.

And should the driver who wins the national championship be Don Lostumbo, Larry Lauterbach won't know whether to be satisfied because he built Lostumbo's boat or upset because he didn't win the race.

As for Lostumbo, he'll just be satisfied.

