

Editorially Speaking

by Ron Piechota



You never know what to expect in this job.

When the phone rang one fine morning recently, I really had no idea that in one hour I'd be taking a drive in a high performance boat. Now, granted, I do this somewhat frequently here but the difference is that I usually do it in the water.

So, with no prior knowledge, this phone call informs our office to get ready for the first Kustom Kraft speedboat to ever hit the pavement without a trailer.

Sure enough, it was like nothing we've ever seen and are likely to until sometime in the future when Dwain Kolb, the man who built it, stops by with yet another creation. Originally a high speed powerboat, this unique customization no longer travels on water, but on land — at speeds up to 130 mph.

But the story we've put together on this "boatrod" (page 18) isn't just the story of a fiberglass boat that's undergone a sex change. This is also the story of the builder.

Everyone's childhood has had at least one Dwain Kolb in it. That is, the kid with the incredible mechanical aptitude, capable of fixing anything and modifying it at will to suit his needs.

Many of these kids grow up to pursue a technical education and translate this ability into a high paying job; others use their skills to become mechanics or something equally pragmatic.

Some never grow up. Or perhaps they grow up to find that being an adult simply means becoming better at fixing and modifying their toys.

Frankly, I think we need more people who singlemindedly pursue their childlike dreams. Not so they can be idolized but that unbridled creativity can.

Tom Gentry is certainly a man who pursues his dreams with an unrelenting passion. Gentry is a very successful real estate developer who

is, of course, more renowned as one of America's premier offshore racers.

He's recently unleashed a boat that truly deserves to be called incredible; without question. Inside this 110' boat, christened the *Gentry Eagle*, he's managed to pack an extraordinary 11,460 hp. Compare this to: Popeyes offshore Superboat which has four 850 hp engines totaling 3,400 hp; a Top Fuel Hydro dragboat which can come to the line with about 3,000 hp (ditto for Unlimiteds); or the boat that Craig Artons is putting together, for an attempt at the world water speed record, which will develop approximately 4,000 hp.

Of course, I don't mean to draw comparisons between any of these boats but just to highlight the awesome power of the *Gentry Eagle*.

Its unique power arrangement employs two 3480 hp German MTU diesels on either side of the center-mounted 4,500 hp, made in America, Lycoming turbine.

At presstime, Gentry had already completed one exciting record breaking feat with his new boat and two more were scheduled before the end of June.

His first challenge was accomplished on June 3rd when he established a new record time in racing from Miami, Florida to Nassau, Bahamas and back, shaving over 50 minutes off the previous record.

Next up in the record breaking series was a scheduled 1257 mile jaunt from Miami to New York in an attempt to break a two year old record of 19 hours and 31 minutes.

The final leg of this offshore triple header is the most ambitious of them all. He will attempt, with only one fueling stop, to cross the Atlantic in a time that is less than 3 days, 8 hours and 31 minutes, the current record established in 1986. Richard Branson set this 3386 mile New York to England record in his 72' monohull, *Virgin Atlantic Challenger II*.

Performing in the open ocean at this level is truly amazing when considering the size of the *Gentry Eagle*. Its 110' is larger than the three boats holding the three records mentioned above by sizes ranging from 38' to 64'.

Ten people were on board during the Miami to Nassau event and he even got to test out his Comsat satellite telephone hookup by making a few calls while in-route.

An interesting side note to this story is the new high tech polymer coating that was used on its exterior. According to its inventor, Dr. Keith Kent, testing done by Gentry crew chief John Conner estimated that the increased speed due to reduced drag would have required an additional 1000 hp to achieve without using the coating.

Kiss-Cote was first introduced publicly this past February and you'll probably be hearing more about it as time passes because of its remarkable variety of applications. Testing suggests that Kiss-Cote can be used not only in powerboats but sail boats, cars and airplanes.

The two to ten percent improvement in speed that comes from using Kiss-Cote was discovered after five years of testing.

There is, by the way, a very good reason for the name "Kiss-Cote." Dr. Kent is a dentist and he originally invented the coating with the idea that it would prevent plaque from sticking to teeth.

A suggestion that this might have marine applications led to some testing that showed barnacles were no match for its non-stick properties. Fast forward six years and we now have a product that you can use on your boat or car.

Kent says that Kiss-Cote can be applied as simply as ordinary wax and cost approximately .25 to .50 cents per square foot to use. A boat can also immediately be placed in the water after application.

To join the ranks of Cigarette and Wellcraft who have experimented with this product, contact: Dr. Keith Kent, Kent Integrated Scientific Systems Inc., 4577 Gunn Highway, Box 101, Tampa Florida 33624. (813) 962-2703.

File this one in the Oops! Department. In last month's article on mini boats the printer inadvertently eliminated the address that should have been included at the end of the section on Funjet Boats. For those of you wishing to contact them, here's the address: Funjet Boats, Inc., 8900 Kirby, Suite 190, Houston, Texas 77054. (713) 664-5772.

While we're in this department we might as well take care of one more item. At the end of the "Sprucing up for Summer" article, that also ran last month, we indicated that we would be bringing you part two of this feature concerning the refinishing of your boat this month. At presstime, the engine wasn't yet ready for installation and we decided that the feature didn't communicate as effectively the refinishing of a boat without the visual punch provided by a fully rigged boat. So if you could wait just one more month we'll show you the finished product. **HB**

