

Local teams offer up humour and speed

Alfie Lau

Burnaby Now

Saturday, August 30, 2008

Say the words 'soapbox derby,' and old-time traditionalists will tell you about the world championships held for kids in Akron, Ohio since 1934.

But when energy drink maker Red Bull decided to turn a kids' sport into an adult pastime in 2000, the result has been more than 35 fun competitions held around the world - from the first race in Belgium to Australia to South Africa, Finland, Jamaica to Italy - and the first Canadian stop in Vancouver on Sunday, Sept. 7.

The non-motorized racing event challenges both experienced racers and amateurs alike to design and build outrageous, human-powered soapbox dream machines and compete against the clock and each other in a downhill race.

The 56 teams competing in Vancouver have had several months to put together their racing contraptions, and there are seven Burnaby-based teams.

Here's a look at some teams.

- Ambiguously Gay Duo, consisting of Robert Baikie, Joel Atwater, Andy Smit and Luke Collins, brag about the fact they've already designed a hot air balloon, a wave energy machine, a catapult and a potato gun.

- The Global Television team piloted by morning news anchor Lynn Colliar has only one team goal: Racing fast down the hill and hoping the brakes work.

- Holly Smokes, consisting of Mike Kaerne, Mark Livingston, Frank Kemble and driver Glenn Nixon, have designed a machine that looks like the Viper from Battlestar Galactica (see story starting on page 1).

- Lickity Split, driven by Christian 'Lawless' Lawlor, with mechanics Tyler 'Fatboy' Demers, Sheena 'Princess' Villanueva and Louise 'Catwoman' Higginbotham, designed their craft after being inspired by a Dairy Queen commercial.

- Pursuit of Happiness, driven by Andrew Ao and built by Fai Ly and Dick Lau, have a vehicle that looks like Pac-Man. "We have very low expectations, so we tend to overachieve our goals most of the time," they say.

- The Graveyard Shift is made up of groundsman from the Masonic cemetery, and their vehicle is basically a coffin on wheels. Driver Chris Alionis and mechanics Calvin Stuckert and Richard Anderson also have a dark sense of humour.

"We work the graveyard shift with a skeleton crew at a dead-end job," is one of their team statements.

- You're Not Sushi - You're Chicken is a team consisting of driver Elizabeth Chan and mechanics Leonard, Jenny and Adrienne Chan. Their team car looks like a chicken with a fork stuck in it.

The race on Sept. 7 starts at 1 p.m. on West Fourth Avenue, between Vine and Burrard, in Vancouver. It is free for spectators. For more information, go to www.redbullsoapbox.ca.

© Burnaby Now 2008

CLOSE WINDOW

Copyright © 2008 CanWest Interactive, a division of [CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc.](#). All rights reserved.
CanWest Interactive, a division of [CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc.](#). All rights reserved.