

RYAN ELLIS - The Regina Sun



Imagine you were stranded on a desert island with a few scraps of wood, a handful of primitive tools and a roll of duct tape. Would have what it takes to construct a boat to sail yourself to safety? That's the challenge being put to contestants in the Canadian Progress Club's first annual Plywood Cup to be held on July 24. A joint fundraiser for both the Raise A Reader program and the Pediatric Outpatient unit at the Regina General Hospital, the Plywood Cup is based on a similar competition that the Vancouver

chapter of the Canadian Progress Club has been hosting for eight years, says Mauro Montanini, one of the events organizers. "The event is really unique," says Montanini. "People hear about it and they say 'that sounds like a lot of fun!' "The goal of the event is for each team of four to construct a seaworthy vessel with a limited number of supplies in a limited amount of time. Each team will be supplied with two sheets of plywood, one 2x2, a hammer, a hand saw, nails, a yardstick, a tape-measure, a pencil and one roll of duct tape.

Teams then have 90 minutes to construct their boat which one team member will captain across Wascana lake. In Vancouver the event has become so popular that organizers now sell advertising on the dock space because so many people attend. Montanini says he was told about the idea by one of the members of the Vancouver chapter and "immediately thought of the rejuvenated, rehabilitated Wascana lake and what a beautiful setting that would be for this kind of event." And that's all it took for the wheels to be set in motion.

The first order of business was to float the idea past the Wascana Centre Authority. "We went and met with them," says Montanini, "and in less than five minutes they said 'we love the idea, you have our commitment for the use of the lake.' "After that, things just started to fall into place. Fries Tallman Lumber agreed to donate the cost of the boat-building materials, Big Rock came on board with a donation of beer and many local businesses pledged their support by registering teams for the event. After only a week of solicitation Montanini says that 10 teams have already registered for the race, which is limited to 20 teams. Even the City of Regina is getting involved, fielding a team that will consist of Mayor Pat Fiacco and three city councillors.

As for how much pre-planning or outside consultation each group will be able to do Montanini laughs and says "we'll leave that entirely to the teams discretion." Though the event will be a new experience for everyone involved, Montanini says that some of the teams have already begun to express their confidence at winning the event. "Several of the companies that are taking up the challenge are quite convinced that they have the winning formula," he says. In addition to awarding the winning team with a suitably assembled trophy ("We have built a humungous, solid wood cup," Montanini says) prizes will also be awarded in several other categories.

These include awards for first boat to sink, best dressed team and individual and team awards for most pledges. The group holds a number of fundraisers throughout the year including a silent auction and a

comedy night hosted by Casino Regina. Most of these are adult-only events, so Montanini is excited to have this opportunity to put on an event the whole family can enjoy. "We're really pleased that this is something that whether you're eight or 80 you can attend and watch and it's going to be a riot," he says. "An absolute blast." The Regina chapter of the national organization has been around for 18 years and has raised more than \$1 million for local children's charities. For more information, contact Mauro Montanini at 359-3108 or Don Promhouse at 721-1725.