

COMMUNITY

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2004



BY GREG FARRAR

Youngsters enjoy a miniature roller coaster at the carnival.



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Anna Denton and daughter Alyana, 4, of Issaquah enjoy the Super Slide.

A flavor for fun

Tastin' N Racin' draws a crowd at Lake Sammamish State Park



BY GREG FARRAR

Limited 4-cylinder light hydroplanes race around Lake Sammamish in early-round heats Saturday.



BY GREG FARRAR

Asia Sattler (left) and boyfriend Tommy Hubbell start in on a hamburger from the Bratwurst Haus, one of the international-food booths at Tastin' N Racin'.

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BY GREG FARRAR

The Seattle Cossacks Motorcycle Stunt and Drill Team performs Saturday at the eighth annual Tastin' N Racin' Festival at Lake Sammamish State Park.

Tastin' N Racin' offers variety of flavorful fun

BY DAVID HAYES

Cooler weather and the threat of rain did little to dampen the spirits of festival-goers at the eighth annual Tastin' N Racin' festival this past weekend at Lake Sammamish State Park.

The main attraction is the limited-hydro races, but traditional festival fun — namely food and vendors — is always a main draw, too.

Between races there was plenty to do for the entire family to keep

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Fans watch the hydro races Saturday from the beach at Lake Sammamish.

Festival: 'Everyone goes away a winner'

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busy, including international-food and crafters' booths, a carnival for the kids and a car show on Sunday for fans of all ages.

The most popular carnival attraction, evidenced by the line and the barker shouting "winner!" into a mini-loudspeaker, was the test of strength at the High Striker. Tony Weeldrewer took his best shot with sledgehammer to target, sending the lights on the meter to the top. He just missed a perfect score by two, having to settle for 148. His son Nathan, 3, didn't seem to mind, having an armload of inflatable mallets and other stuffed animals as prizes.

"We came up here with the family from Auburn. I played about four or five times," Weeldrewer admitted. "You win something every time. Everyone goes away a winner."

With attendance numbers down from last year, Laupupuni Poloai, 15, and Masima Vili, 13,

had time for extended breaks from their parents' food booth, the Wai Kiki Luau. Poloai, quarterback for Chief Sealth High School, made due with supplies on hand. He and Vili chucked a water bottle back and forth in the field behind the food booths.

"We always are able to find something to play a game with," Poloai said. "It's not so busy, so we play around."

The smaller Vili tried to proclaim he had the better arm, but Poloai just smiled.

There were smiles aplenty at the waterfront, where the true fans of the sport congregate. As the boats sped around the course, fans were entertained by a bonus spectator — a great blue heron that seemed unfazed by the surrounding excitement. The large bird split its time between a perch on a buoy and flying nonchalantly up and down the beach.

In the center of the beach, a large group of fans sat beneath a canopy, enjoying the conversation between races. Glenn Ammerman, a self-proclaimed "old boy from Issaquah," was appointed spokesman for the group. Having been to the festival six years running now, Ammerman said the group of 20 or so were serious about their patronage. The appeal for them? "The food. The boats. The people. There's nothing better than that," Ammerman said.

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Hydros

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As things turned out, the UL-72 got off to an outstanding start. The boat took the lead early and stayed in front of the UL-1.

"I was driving it hard, maybe a little too hard," Woods said.

The UL-72 averaged 106.120 mph in the final with the UL-1 going 103.366.

After watching the UL-72 Red Rocket cruise to first place, Pat Malara, general manager for ULHRA Inc., turned to O'Brien and said "I can't believe how fast the 72 is."

But Woods, who replaced four-time driving champion Bononcini in the cockpit of the UL-72 this year, was on a mission. After spending a few seconds to spare for a few congratulatory pats on the back, Woods raced to his daughter's college graduation.

"I wasn't going to miss that for anything. For a while I thought I might not even drive in the final. As it turned out, I was just able to get the final in."

All in all it was a big weekend for boat racing. In addition to the unlimited lights, Tastin' N Racin' showcased the lighter than lights and the nostalgic circle boats.