

Cardboard boat race kicks off FVUW campaign

By Jennifer Rice
Managing editor

The Fox Valley United Way will launch its annual fundraising campaign next month with its What Floats Your Cardboard Boat race on Aurora's Mastodon Lake in Phillips Park.

This year will mark the organization's 10th annual event of fun on the water. It considered having a different event to mark the organization's milestone, but racers wouldn't have it.

"Our racers love this event so much that they come back year after year and didn't want us to do anything different," said FVUW Director of Administration Deborah Collins.

The boat race starts 10:30 a.m., Saturday, Aug. 18. Check in is between 8:30 and 9:30 a.m.

The FVUW improves the lives in the communities it serves by donating money to more than 55 local health and human services, like Hessed House, Aurora Interfaith Food Pantry and Mutual Ground.

Its annual What Floats Your Cardboard Boat race is a social mixer for all the entities involved, like its funding agencies, supporting companies and independent recipients.

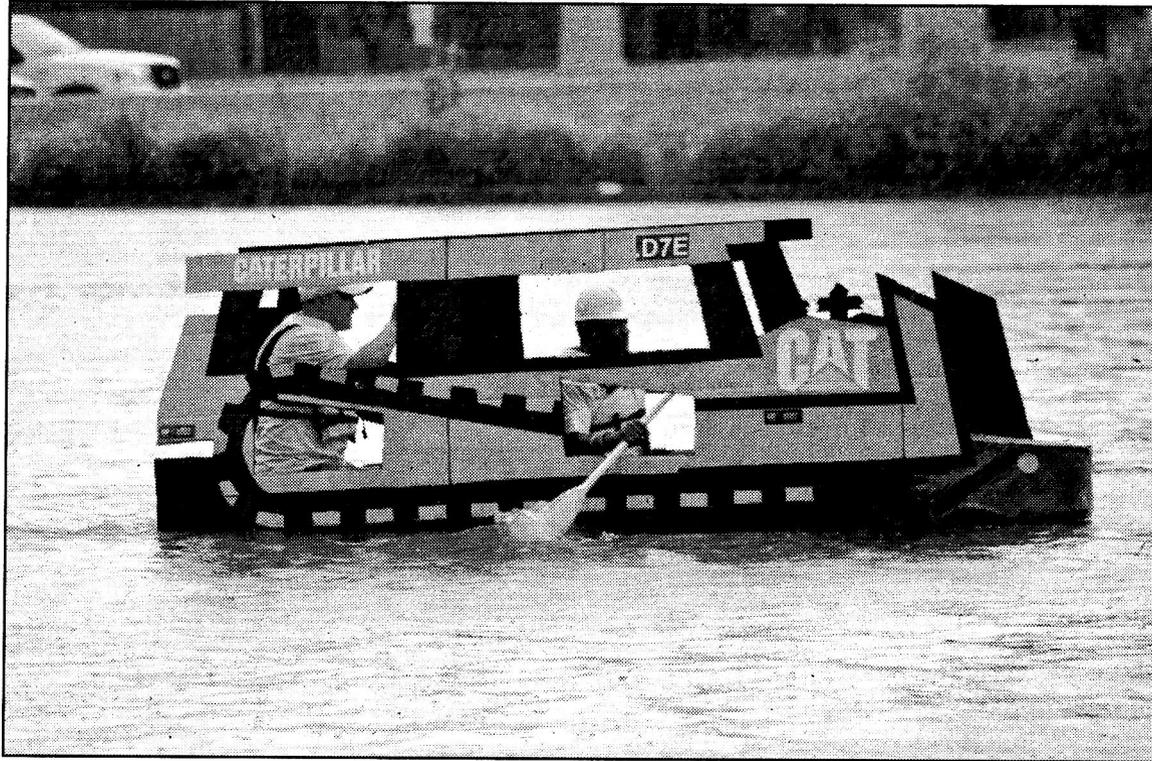


Photo courtesy of Fox Valley United Way

Last year, Caterpillar's cardboard boat paddles through Mastadon Lake on its way to the finish line. Caterpillar's boats always reflect the heavy machinery equipment it produces.

"It makes people aware the United Way is about making our community better. People get to see the dynamics of the full circle of what United Way is all about," Collins said.

By bringing everybody together, the event is know as

a 'friendraiser.' "It's the most unusual event I know of and we all have the time of our lives," Collins added.

Participants are divided into five divisions, such as business, community and adult categories. First, sec-

ond and third place trophies are awarded in each division and a cardboard boat must have been raced the entire length of the course to qualify as a finisher. Boats can either be human powered or have muscle-powered mechanical

propulsion, like propellers or paddle wheels.

Race medals are guaranteed to all registered participants and special trophies are awarded for Team Spirit, Judge's Choice, People's Choice and Most Spectacular Sinking, which is the highlight of the event.

"Some people build a boat specifically to sink just so they can win the award," Collins said.

Last year, that award went to the Hessed Hippy Happening boat designed by Hessed House, which resembled a VW van. Other contestants have floated on a triangle-shaped slice of pizza or a banana.

Many of the participating businesses sign up year after year and use the boat building event as a team building exercise. "This event is so outside what they do on a daily basis, that it brings a team of people together to work on a project," Collins said.

Cano Container Corporation in Aurora generously donates eight sheets of 4-foot x 8-foot corrugated cardboard to each boat registered. For more information, visit www.uwfoxvalley.org

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