

Mighty Mighty DragonFlies Race Well

By Heather Van Meter



Some of the DragonFlies in May

The OWLS DragonFlies made a splash in the water and in the *Sunday Oregonian* this year with another terrific outing at the Rose Festival dragon boat races on June 11 and 12. A great photo of the team appeared in the Rose Festival section of the newspaper on June 12, with flag catcher Barbara Creel bent over the front of the dragonhead and caller Cecil Reniche-Smith at the helm.

The team started out strong on Saturday, finishing second in each of its two races, with times of 3:05 and 3:02, paddling at a speedy 72 strokes per minute. These strong results placed the 'Flies in Division 1, the competitive division, where the team has been placed for the past several years. The DragonFlies moved on to the quarterfinals the next day.

Sunday morning the team came with game faces on, ready to give it their all. As caller Cecil Reniche-Smith screamed to the paddlers, "It's in you, it's in you, you can do it!" the team gutted it out and turned in a 3:00 flat time in the quarterfinal race. The 'Flies were in the fastest overall heat of the quarterfinals, and came in third, moving on to the semifinals. Their semifinal race featured the two teams that would finish first and second in the finals. The 'Flies had their best race yet, and videotape confirms that their paddles were buried and they were all paddling in unison, coming on strong at the end. But their big "Finish it now!" at the end wasn't quite enough to catch Wasabi and the Amazons, and the 'Flies finished third, with a time of 2:59, missing the finals by just a couple of seconds.

Despite departing from the races earlier than in years past, the team celebrated a successful and fun race weekend at an excellent post-race gathering for team members and significant others hosted at Ren Adams's house.

The DragonFlies owe a special thank-you to all our sponsors, including Oregon Women Lawyers; Lane Powell PC; Settlement Professionals, Inc.; Tonkon Torp LLP; Wardinsky & Bobzien PC; Yates Matthews & Associates PC; Naegeli Reporting Corporation; Stephanie Tate, RN, Paradigm Legal Nurse Consulting; Goldberg, Mechanic, Stuart & Gibson LLP; Healing Hands Massage; Kash for Kids; Susan L. Phillips, Attorney at Law, PLC; and Williams Kastner & Gibbs PLLC.

Special kudos go to Beth Allen, Diane Rea, Michelle Rudd, and Heide Cole for being such excellent stroke people; Barbara Creel for her amazing flag-catching feats; and Cecil Reniche-Smith for calling all the races, giving it everything until she could no longer breathe or speak. The 'Flies have two more races this summer: in Kent, Washington, on July 16, and in Victoria, B.C., on August 12-14. Anyone wishing to join the DragonFlies team for these races (and the Rose Festival next year) should contact captains Nancy Bergeson or Heather Van Meter. Team membership is open to all women studying or working in the legal or law-related fields.

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Second Annual LAF-OFF on Sept. 9

Business leaders, attorneys, and legal professionals in Oregon are looking forward to the second annual LAF-OFF Comedy Competition, to take place on September 9 at the Memorial Coliseum in Portland. The event uses humor to raise awareness for Oregon's legal aid programs and to kick off the annual fund drive of The Campaign for Equal Justice. The Legal Aid Fundraiser, sponsored by Fios® Inc. and Friends (LAF-OFF), will feature up to ten Oregon legal professionals who will compete head-to-head in a stand-up comedy competition, judged by a panel of real-life judges straight from the bench.

A legal-needs study in 2000 sponsored by the Oregon State Bar, the governor's office, and the Oregon Judicial Department reported that less than 20% of the legal needs of poor people in Oregon were being met. The money raised by the 2005 LAF-OFF will help provide legal counsel to hundreds of people in need.

"LAF-OFF is a unique event that brings together associates, partners, administrators, paralegals, vendors, and the business community to support Oregon's legal aid programs in a very festive and humorous evening," said Sandy Hansberger, executive director of The Campaign for Equal Justice. "And I was surprised by just how funny the contestants were last year. I brought my thirteen-year-old and he had a blast." The evening will include a pre-show happy hour with music, hors d'oeuvres, and dinner.



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