

# Cardboard Boat Regatta

## Defending champs from Grocery Outlet suffer disappointment

ANTHONY DION  
adion@tdn.com

Upon watching the annual Longview Cardboard Boat Regatta for the first time, it was apparent that there remains a gross overestimation of how much weight a

constructed craft of corrugated cardboard, tape and glue will support for a three to five minute race.

There was no shortage of cardboard crafts to try their hand in the regatta on a sunny Sunday afternoon. Once again, crafts varied in size, style, model, color, decoration and even in propulsion. Over the span of seven heats in the water between Lions Island and Martin's Dock,

Please see **CARDBOARD**, Page B3

THE DAILY NEWS

SPORTS

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 2023 | B3

## Cardboard

From B1

the top two finishers generally favored the smaller crafts with fewer crew members aboard.

Take, for instance, the two-man team of the Bah Humbug boat. The Bah Humbug destroyed its heat of challengers, reaching the finish line before the other three boats made it three-quarters of the way to the second buoy.

Then there was the eventual champion of the regatta, the underdog entry known as the Folk Family Four, which nipped the two-time defending champion Grocery Outlet boat at the wire with some fierce paddling down the final 50 meters. Folk Family Four relied on a smaller canoe-style craft, just large enough for the two parents and two young children to sit in comfortably and paddle on both port and starboard sides.

Larger crafts, such as the "Nothing Says Christmas Like a Beaver" boat or entry No. 33 barely made it a full cycle around the buoys before taking on water like the Titanic. That No. 33 craft was constructed in the style of a dual pontoon boat, but its lack of support over the span soon left it resembling a water bed as the crew attempted to maneuver back and forth from port and starboard to paddle. There was another large craft that was crewed by seven people that resembled a coffin, cutting through the water about as well as one would have imagined.

Folk Family Four, captained by Dan Folk and crewed by Julie, Moira and Gabriel Folk, reached the title round by winning the second semifinal in spite of a few reservations from the crew as to whether the craft would hold up under the duress of another round of competition in Lake Sacajawea.

Buoyed by the craft's performance in the second race, the Folk Family raced with full confidence against the favored Longview Bridge Club's Scooter Santa craft and a solid second challenger from the defending champion Grocery Outlet boat. The Scooter Santa vessel, another craft on the smaller side with an arrowhead shape, edged Grocery Outlet at the wire in the first semifinal, which only elevated the tension in the championship.



KATELYN METZGER PHOTOS, THE DAILY NEWS

Champions, the Folk Family Four, made up of Dan, Julie, Moira and Gabriel, cross the finish line of the final heat of the Cardboard Boat Regatta on Sunday, July 2, in Longview's Lake Sacajawea. Behind them, "Scooter Santa" comes in third after team "All We Want for Christmas is Grocery Outlet."

A fourth boat, the Yule Tide, took on copious amounts of water in the first semifinal and left serious doubt as to whether the boat was sea-worthy enough for the finale. After a moment of hesitation, the Yule Tide team loaded into its blue-painted mass of cardboard and attempted to sidle up to the starting line with the other three challengers.

Only the Yule Tide never made it that far.

Overloaded with crew and unreasonable confidence, the boat advanced approximately 10 feet before it lost part of the starboard side and quickly capsized as if it had been torpedoed. By the time Yule Tide was hoisted from the mucky water of Lake Sacajawea, all that was left was a pile of wet cardboard which looked set for a bonfire funeral.

"After the second race, we started taking on lots of water," captain Chris Pauls said. "I think we had too many people."

Yule Tide was participating in the infamous regatta for the first time. It opted to construct a larger boat that could fit a crew of seven. After winning its heat, the boat started to fold under the pressure, and weight, of its crew in race two.

"I was hoping it wouldn't stay too together so I wouldn't have to store it," Pauls added.

Despite the outcome, the captain and crew had fun and they're already looking forward to competing in the regatta again in one year's time.

Others were not so happy to settle for consolation prizes.

With an eye on winning its third straight regatta, Grocery Outlet stole the inside post and raced up the line to the first turn looking to hold off its challengers on the outside. The strategy worked as the Grocery Outlet gang held the lead past the second turn with both Folk Family Four and Scooter Santa trailing by two to three lengths on the outside.

But as Grocery Outlet turned for home with visions of a third Cardboard Boat Regatta trophy dancing in the crew's eyes, the port side lost its stroke and the vessel veered hard to the starboard side, losing precious ground in the water games. That miscue gave the Folk Family Four just enough of a window to pass, and with the crowd cheering the Folk boat on from the grassy banks, the family boat reached the bow of Grocery Outlet and surged right on past for a full two length win.

After the win Julie Folk credited the come-from-behind victory to the overall attitude of the team in just their second year competing in the event.

"My daughter said to us, 'If you guys aren't so serious, I'll race again,'" Julie Folk said. "We took it kind of slow in the second race. My daughter was worried we'd sink, but as we got closer to the end of the race, it seemed like we won't spill that easy so let's just go for it."

It helped, too, that the Folk



A sailor salutes the crowd as the boat sinks into Lake Sacajawea after a very short voyage.



Participants laugh as their boat, "Yule Tide," sinks during its third voyage at the cardboard boat Regatta in Longview's Lake Sacajawea, Sunday, July 2.

family is made up of experienced paddlers on the water. The Folk Family Four boat may have been the most efficiently rowed boat of the entire regatta. Julie credited her husband Dan Folk for the big surge that helped their boat overtake the Grocery Outlet dynasty down the stretch.

"I think he just became a motor at the end," said Julie Folk.

Meanwhile, salty members of the Grocery Outlet crew admonished the port side of their boat for falling off on the paddling effort.

"There was too much power on the right side, not enough power on the left side which pushed us off course," Austin Johnson explained. "They quit rowing at the end."

It was a disappointing finish for a team with the experience

and championship expectations of Grocery Outlet. Team member Tyrel Brunelle noted that the team had been spending four to five hours a day for two weeks building the boat only to see their line back to victory blocked at the last moment.

Aside from the winners, there were other awards presented to standout participants in the regatta. The Bridge Club won for pride/creativity, while Grocery Outlet came away with the spirit award. The Reindeer Don't Fly team won the best dressed award, and Candy Cane was presented with the Titanic award for the year's best sinking.

Washington's District 3 representative to congress, Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, was on hand for the action and served as a judge.