

# COMMUNITY

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2004



BY GREG FARRAR

Youngsters enjoy a miniature roller coaster at the carnival.



BY GREG FARRAR

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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## SPORTS



BY GREG FARRAR

The Issaquah-based UL-40 Thunder Valley boat finished third Sunday in the Baker Equipment Cup race on Lake Sammamish.

# Rocket man

*UL-72 driver wins Baker Equipment Cup, then speeds to daughter's graduation*

BY BOB TAYLOR

Some people thought the UL-72 Graham Trucking-Red Rocket won Sunday's final of the Baker Equipment Cup because of its supercharged engine. Actually it might have been because driver George Woods Jr. was in a hurry to get to his daughter's college graduation.

Sunday turned out to be a hurried and successful day for Woods. A few minutes after winning the featured event of the annual Tastin' N Racin' festival at Lake Sammamish State Park, Woods raced in his automobile to Benaroya Hall in Seattle to see daughter Shana graduate from Central Washington University. He won that race, too.

"I got there just as she was starting to line up to march in," Woods said. "It turned out to be quite a day."

Sunday's racing capped the opening weekend for the Unlimited Light Hydroplane Racing Association (ULHRA) season.

"This was a great way to begin the season," Wood said. "The boat handled perfectly."

The UL-72 Red Rocket, owned by Issaquah's Joe Frauenheim and Sammamish's Phil Bononcini, finished first in three other heats. Saturday it had the second-fastest qualifying time of 123.796 mph.

Defending national champion UL-1 Mike's Hard Lemonade/Happy Go Lucky, driven by the father-and-son team of Jerry and Greg Hopp of Snohomish, finished second. Taking third was Issaquah's UL-40 Thunder Valley, driven by Harold Mills.

The Thunder Valley team was ecstatic with the race and the overall performance of its boat. A year ago the UL-40 broke down at Tastin' N Racin' and that was a harbinger for its season.

"The crew worked real hard on improving the boat over the winter. I'm just showing what they did," Mills said. "We're all real happy with the way the boat is performing."

The UL-40 won the B Main to qualify for the final. It also took second in Heat 2B and third in the Heat 1A.

One of the best races Sunday came in Heat 2B where the UL-72 and the UL-40 were side by side for four laps. The UL-72 pulled away with 100 feet left to win.

"That was an outstanding race," Woods said. "The UL-40 was right there with me the whole race. I'm really happy for those guys especially after the season they had last year. I was happy to see their boat do well."

Finishing fourth Sunday was the UL-51, another boat owned by Frauenheim and Bononcini. Rookie Michael Flaherty drove the UL-51.

Despite winds that often blew the buoys off the racecourse, the weather was practically perfect for Sunday's racing.

"I was concerned when I heard it raining early in the morning," said John O'Brien of Thunder Valley. "But at 10:30 this morning there was this big rainbow over the lake. I knew it was going to be a good day then."

The final shaped up as another battle between the UL-72 and the UL-1. Those boats have dominated ULHRA series the past two seasons.

The UL-1 had won three heats prior to the final and had the fastest qualifying time (123.865) on Saturday.

"The two boats were pretty comparable as far as speeds," Woods said. "I knew if we were going to win we had to get off to a real good start."

# 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.