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Richmond team is set to fly... And will likely sink in the process

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Photo Gallery



[A Day in the Life](#)

Arts

- [Gateway Theatre](#)
- [Richmond Art Gallery](#)
- [Richmond Community Orchestra/Chorus](#)

Sports

- [Kigoos Swim Club](#)
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- [Richmond Girls Softball](#)
- [Richmond Youth Soccer](#)
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- [Richmond Sockeyes](#)
- [Richmond Girls Soccer](#)
- [Richmond Minor Hockey](#)
- [Richmond Boys Fastball](#)
- [Richmond Budgies](#)
- [Seafair Minor Hockey](#)
- [West Richmond Boys Soccer](#)

By **Kristine Thiessen**
Contributor
Aug 17 2006

Picture a pirate ship careening off a 22-foot tall platform and crashing into the waters below, its pirate pilot whooping with glee.

Now picture the waters bobbing with a poutine wagon, giant piece of sushi and an oversized moustache. All will attempt to defy gravity and hurtle off a deck above False Creek this Saturday as participants in Red Bull's flugtag competition.



Mark Patrick photo

Jesse Beglau (right) and crew work on their flugtag, the Pirates of False Creek.

A flugtag is an event where competitors attempt to fly their homemade flying contraptions off a pier into the water.

The Pirates of False Creek, a team of Richmond co-workers, do not predict they'll fly the farthest. The guys make no promise to bring home the gold; they hardly expected to be admitted into the competition in the first place.

See Page 24

From Page 23

"Based on our drawing? Absolutely not," said Simon Beglau, who submitted the team's design.



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The drawing consisted of a surly little pirate standing aboard the outline of a boat, wings sticking out and a flag jutting up from its centre.

Taking a break from work, the team gathered in front of their flying ship, at the time of the interview a mass of pink foam formed vaguely in the shape of a ship's body.

"We're pretty much winging it," quipped teammate Russ Mosley.

The group is made up of Mosley, pilot Phil Hinksman, Stan Bell, Simon Beglau, his brother Jesse and his father Keith. Leo Nomoto, a friend and graffiti artist, embellished the boat with his artistic talent. They plan to rely on their creativity and showmanship—two of three categories, the third being distance—to garner points this weekend, as they lack of the flying experience of some of their competition.

While most teams, like the Pirates, are in it for the adventure, a few other teams are composed of engineers and pilots who should have the know-how to get off the ground. A Quebec team from the École Nationale d'Aérotechnique, has logged 242 hours of flying experience.

The main flying experience of the Pirates is work-related, a necessity of being employed at Echo Glass: "We hang off tall buildings together," said Simon, although his father jokes, "I've been flying by the seat of my pants for 25 years."

The first time absurd contraptions were brought together and told to fly was in Austria in 1991. Since then, over 35 flugtag competitions have been hosted around the world, from New Zealand, to Israel, to London, to Dubai.

Flugtag literally means "flying day" in German. The flugtag world record is 195 feet, achieved in Austria six years ago. A more modest 78 feet is the record to beat in North America, set in Ohio. For the Red Bull-sponsored event, a flugtag vessel must be less than nine metres wide and weigh less than 200 kilograms, including the weight of the pilot. The pilot is accompanied by four pushers: the vehicle must be human-powered only.

The team that flies the farthest, devises a clever, creative contraption, and puts on a raucous, entertaining skit wins the competition. First prize is \$7,500, or a pilot's training course; second prize, \$3,000 or a skydiving adventure; third prize, \$1,500 or a paragliding adventure.

The Pirates remained tight-lipped about their skit, saying only that it will be "absolutely incredible."

The flugtag competition is this Saturday next to Science World at False Creek. Admission is free.

The first team launches at 2 p.m. Visit www.red



Ads by Goooooogle

bullflugtag.ca for more information.

[Red Bull Flugtag in MD](#)

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