



PG&E Finishes 1st at SF International Dragon Boat Festival

By Tony Khing | September 26, 2013

Oracle Team USA created waves with their recent comeback win in the America's Cup. But they weren't the only boating team to rock San Francisco Bay in September.

On September 14, the PG&E Power Dragons took first place for the first time in eight years at the Kaiser Permanente San Francisco International Dragon Boat Festival. The team captured the Corporate Challenge Novice C Division championship by winning three races held in Treasure Island's Clipper Cove, located in the shadows of the Bay Bridge's new eastern span.

Like Oracle Team USA, PG&E's team spent lots of time practicing for the 18th annual event. The team logged more than 600 volunteer hours practicing at San Francisco's Lake Merced and prepping for the race. PG&E's crew was led by co-captains **Christine Jiang** (Business Finance-Gas Operations) and **Melissa Heng** (Customer Impact).



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PG&E's Power Dragons team, sponsored through Community Relations, was amongst 35 entries from local corporations such as AAA, Google and Wells Fargo Bank. Besides Community Relations, the InspirAsian Employee Resource Group, Gas Operations Transmission Engineering and Design and Safety Engineering, and Health Services supported the team on race day with shirts, food and beverages.

Dragon boat racing consists of 20 paddlers who sit in two rows of 10 in a colorful, 500-pound boat that features a dragon's head at the front and a tail on the back. Paddlers row to the beat of a drummer who sits in the front as they race on a 500-meter course.

Dragon boat festivals are held worldwide on the fifth day of the lunar calendar's fifth month. The festival commemorates the suicide of Qu Yuan, a well-respected poet, minister and councilor to the kingdom of Chu. This kingdom was one of seven who were battling for supremacy during the Warring

States Period of ancient Chinese history in the fourth century B.C.

According to legend, Yuan was sent into exile because jealous rivals accused him of treason. So Yuan threw himself into writing patriotic and politically sensitive poems. However, Yuan was so distraught over his exile that he tied a large rock to his body and threw himself into the Mi Lo River.

The locals, who loved Yuan very much, were upset upon hearing of his fate. Local fishermen raced to the scene in their long boats, beating their drums and splashing their oars to scare the fish away as they recovered Yuan's body.

Today, the dragon boat festival races are held to mimic the frantic rush to save Yuan's body from the hungry fish.

Proceeds from this year's festival went to two organizations: the CDBA Youth Dragon Boat Program and Self Help for the Elderly. CDBA provides a free year-round dragon boat program for 1,000 high school students in the San Francisco Bay Area. Self Help for the Elderly is a non-profit organization which serves more than 35,000 seniors in San Francisco, Alameda, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.



The hard-working PG&E Power Dragons won the championship in their division at the 18th annual Kaiser Permanente San Francisco International Dragon Boat Festival.

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