

Those homemade flying machines!

Take a few pieces of wood, some nuts and bolts and make an engine to take you to the skies. If you share this passion, be there at Dubai Creek for the first Flugtag

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They all seem like decent and hardworking folk, nursing the typical expat dream of a bigger house or perhaps the latest car. They all seem to share a common itch, an urge to fly. The spirit of Wilbur Smith is well and alive in them. As the first ever Flugtag to be held in the UAE reaches the construction phase, the final 36 teams have been chosen and are busy laying plans to build their flying machines. The result of their work will be seen on November 25 at the Dubai Creek Park.

Brendan Poole of the Film Work Camel Flug decided to participate in it after watching it for years on television back home in South Africa. "When I learnt that it was taking place in Dubai I knew this chance had to be taken. We all work extremely long hours considering the business we are in which is production of advertising films. We all share this passion and we decided to have a go at it. We sat and brainstormed and came up with the idea of a flying camel. We did not want to be insulting to anyone and we hope to do something special with it. At the end of it all I hope to have a great time doing this".

The announcement of the Flugtag created a great deal of excitement in the region. It attracted three hundred and seventy three teams each comprising five members.



The machine will not fly always, but the spirits will...

These teams comprised individuals from different nationalities, backgrounds, ages and professions. Also, some local and other expatriates based in the country.

The elected teams all met the strict guidelines laid down by the ground control committee. This meant these flying machines cannot exceed two hundred kg and that no auxiliary lifting device, power source or stored energy such as batteries are allowed, machines must be launched from a 6m high runway using only human power. This year's competition has attracted teams from Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudia Arabia. The team innovatively called Aeroicctuk and comprising media professionals feel that these specifications are the ideal recipe to encourage innovation. Samir, a freelance

graphic designer say's that the idea of having fun was what motivated them to take part. "We had seen this couple of times on television and were taken in by the fun all the contestants were having". With regards to the rather tricky matter of finance, they seem to be strangely quiet. "We have no idea how much it will cost. Since we will be spending out of our pockets we will have to be innovative as you can see from the design".

For some, the prospect of using this experience as a team building exercise proved to be the motivating factor. Stuart McClean of the Knowledge Horizon, a corporate training organization whose design is appropriately called "Flying Graduate", thinks this will provide his team with a great deal of fun as well as encourage a great

degree of bonding. "It is a one off experience and we will learn a lot about each other". Sponsored by the company, the team hopes to make quite a splash in November.

Finance is a touchy matter for the participating teams. "We are a bunch of bums who have managed to enter the final round. We have no idea how we are going to build it though," says Chris, another participant. Some of the team's spending will be in the region of twenty five thousand dirhams. Some would be sponsored by corporates like the Wafi team and others by high spirited individuals. "I will spend as much as my wife lets me to" said a participant who refused to give his name. "I don't want to get an earful from my wife for letting the world know that she controls me".