

The Tagliatela College of Engineering

Making Physics Float

Standard-issue college clubs include debate teams, fraternities and sororities, even law clubs. But for students in the Tagliatela College of Engineering, a Concrete Canoe Club seemed perfectly fitting.

Like a Scrabble or chess club, the idea is to devise the best solution to a sticky situation, especially if all your letters are I, or your queen has been captured. Getting a concrete canoe to float makes those problems seem minuscule by comparison.

"This project is a real application of physics," said the leader of the Concrete Canoe Club, Chris Stankus '09.

The Club worked on the ground floor of Buckman Hall through the winter and spring, fiddling with the design; lowering and widening the bow, or front, of its canoe to enable it to pivot more readily; and tapering the stern to create less drag. Members mixed the concrete with nylon, polypropylene and tiny glass bubbles in hopes of better buoyancy.



Their machinations worked. After curing and swamp-testing the canoe, they took it out for a spin at New York's Metropolitan Regional Concrete Canoe Conference April 27 at Flushing Meadows Park in Queens. There, they displayed their engineering mettle, taking first place in oral presentation, second for overall workmanship and display, and second in men's slalom. Team members were gratified by the canoe's performance.

"It was quite an accomplishment," Stankus said. "We set a great standard for years to come." To view television coverage of the concrete canoe, visit www.newhaven.edu.



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