

Soap-box racer tests slippery slope



DAVE SEIBERT/THE REPUBLIC

Coty Denogean of Queen Creek heads downhill in Superior during state qualifying Saturday of the All-American Soap Box Derby. Lauren Burgheimer of Mesa and Ava Bahoura of Scottsdale won first place in their divisions and will head to Akron, Ohio, for the U.S. Nationals in July. Denogean finished third in Super Stock.

The Denogean family of Queen Creek fared well in the Superior Soapbox Derby Super Stock Championship in Superior on Saturday.

Brianna Denogean finished second in the Stock Division and just missed earning a trip to Akron, Ohio, for the 70th annual All-American Soap Box Derby

World Championships on July 21.

Coty and Ty Denogean finished third and fourth, respectively, in the Super Stock Division, while Alexis Denogean was 13th in Stock.

Watch it online: See a video of the soap-box racers in action at gilbert.az-central.com.

Elementary school choir fired up about singing in D.C.

By Doug Carroll

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First came the invitation, around Christmas. Then came Diane Walker's vivid dream.

"I dreamed that I was on a plane with my husband and that I heard giggling behind me," Walker recalled. "Then I turned around, and there was my choir."

That dream becomes reality today as the 40-member Patterson Elementary School chorus flies to Washington for the National Anthem Project and three days of festivities. For most of the members, it's the trip of a lifetime: Only two have been to the nation's capital previously.

"This is a huge deal for our whole district," said Walker, Patterson's music teacher for 15 years. "The high schools go places, but generally the elementary schools don't. I think we'll get some national recognition and some nice things to hang on the wall."

At rehearsal on Tuesday morning, Walker was doing her best to peel her students off the ceiling. They were fired

up, and there was little doubt that all would make the 4:15 a.m. bus pickup today at the school.

"It's hard to stay calm," admitted Morgan Rowe, 12, a sixth-grader at Patterson this past school year. "Most of us have never been (to Washington)."

Patterson's choir will be the only one from an elementary school to participate this year. The choir will join with other choirs to sing the national anthem on Thursday at a nationally televised ceremony, and it will present its own 30-minute concert on Friday at Freedom Plaza. It will be part of a drum competition Saturday before returning home late Sunday.

"There will be so many people there," said Hannah Graff, 9, an upcoming fifth-grader. "We might get lost, but we probably won't."

Walker said the trip wouldn't have been possible without the support of Principal Nonda Chomokos and the understanding of Mesa-based American Musical Salute, a tour company that repeatedly extended deadlines for the group to raise the \$40,000 it needed for the trip.

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