



ROBIN KUNISKI/FOR METRO CALGARY

Joanie Snodgrass and Frankie Poulain lead the Sistership dragon boat in practice for the big Dragon Boat race held this weekend at North Glenmore Park.

# Races row in different direction

## Organizers hope to embrace tradition of annual regatta

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**DRAGONBOATS** It's not just about the races anymore. Calgary's Community Dragon Boat Race and Festival, which runs Saturday and Sunday at Glenmore reservoir and is hoped to draw nearly 10,000 people, is taking on a much more inclusive and cultural feel this year, said its chairman Chris Wong.

“Over the years we’ve lost sight of the actual importance of this event to Calgary and haven’t done enough to encourage multicultural participation with a festival-style event,” he said. “Sure, it’s still about the Dragon Boat races, that’s an important part, but we need

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to focus less on the highly competitive nature of the sport and more on using it to build community links.”

Towards that end, Wong said, on top of oriental music, this year’s event will feature First Nations dancing, belly dancing and classic guitar playing, even

though they only had about four months to pull it all together as the event was originally cancelled at Glenmore Reservoir.

“We’ve done everything we can for this year, we would have liked to do more, but there wasn’t much we could have done about the time factor,” Wong said. “We just couldn’t let this thing die, it’s too important to Calgary to have an event like this.”