

Team work helps solve mind games

By Casey Hane
staff writer

THE CREATIVE juices flowed Saturday as student minds struggled to compete.

The Farmington-area OM Competition was held throughout the day at North Farmington High School, reading the 19 teams and 205 students for regional competition March 7 in Clarkston.

Students have worked since early fall preparing for OM competition.

OM was formerly known as Olympics of the Mind, a name that is being challenged through litigation by the International Olympic Committee.

Teams from schools in the Farmington and Clarenceville districts participated Saturday. They now prepare for elimination-type competition in regional, state and world OM contests, pitting mind against matter in a 5-person team effort.

The Farmington school district has participated in OM for the past five years and encourages students of all ages to become involved, according to OM spokeswoman Sue Giannotta. Many of the district's gifted students are involved in OM.

ALTHOUGH THE top three teams in each category received recognition Saturday, all students were honored with medals for participating.

"You know kids pretend a lot. The imagination is there, but sometimes they can't really put it into practice."

— Sue Giannotta
OM spokeswoman

Most of these students, plus a few additional teams, will compete in the regional OM Competition, Giannotta said.

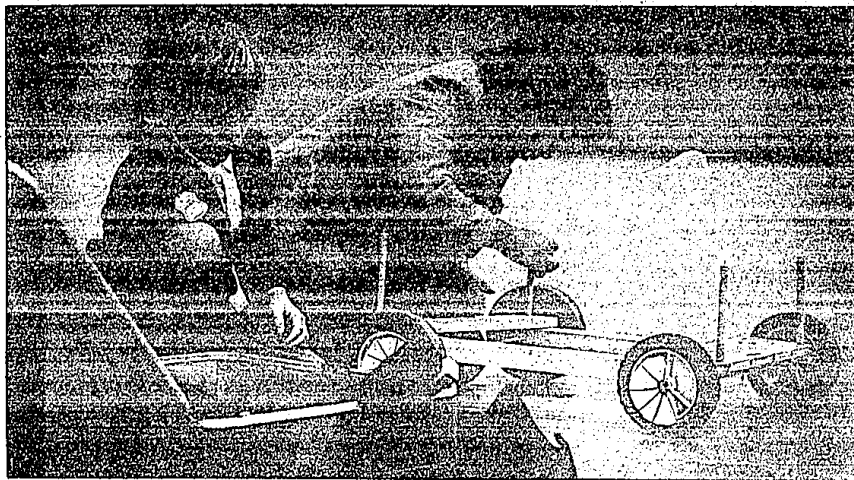
The competition has been in existence since 1978. It began with 20 teams and has grown to about 5,000.

OM's goal is to tug on the creative strings in each child's brain. "You know kids pretend a lot," Giannotta said. "The imagination is there, but sometimes they can't really put it into practice."

OM HELPS students to expand their imaginations, work together as a team and take responsibility. "This is something the kids have to do themselves," she added.

Each team chooses a long-term problem, as offered by the National OM Association in New Jersey.

The competition is divided into segments by grade levels; teams



Rio Oros (left), 8, and Ricky Bhasin, 11 — both Wooddale Elementary students — are shown assembling a car that was stored in a suitcase during the Omer to the Rescue competition.

compete in the same segment, Giannotta said. Segment I includes grades 2-5, Segment II grades 6, 7, and 8, and Segment III grades 9, 10, 11 and 12.

THIS YEAR'S problems included:

- Omer to the Rescue — teams selecting this problem had to design and build a vehicle which fit into 1-2 suitcases. They had to use the vehicle to maneuver through a small area relieving a person in distress and helping in other emergencies. This was the most popular problem this year, Giannotta said.

- Chain Reaction — teams had to link together 50 mousetraps and create a design that would break a balloon, ring a bell and power a "mousemobile" vehicle.

- Poetic License — teams were given a list of more than a dozen classical poems. They had to do a parody, satire or allegory based on the poem selected. This included designing costumes, creating a playbill and other efforts.

- Decision Structure — this problem is repeated each year. The team must build a structure of Balsa wood with strict specifications for the wood and height and depth of the structure. It must hold weight — the structure which holds the most is the winner.

- Cro-Magnon — these teams must create a performance set in prehistoric times. Part of this effort involves making a cave painting; inventing a tool, making a musical instrument of bone or wood and making a real or fictional-type animal that moves.

ALL THE problems are timed, with the exception of Decision Structure, which goes until the structures break, and Chain Reaction where the team members must give an estimated time for their problem.

Chain Reaction and Decision Structure also are non-verbal problems,



OM Competition judges tabulate the scores. From left are Cheryl Boger, Carol Atterbaugh and Margie Jablin.

allowing teams to compete internationally, Giannotta added.

There is also a short-term, spontaneous part of the competition, where teams are given three minutes to creatively answer a problem given by judges. Each member must answer individually, although teams are scored as one.

Giannotta calls this portion "rapid fire questions." They find "amazing ways to put things together," she said.

ALTHOUGH LOCAL competition does not count in the long-term OM contest, teams get feedback from

judges and can better themselves before heading for regionals, she said.

Local winners from Saturday's competition included:

- Omer to the Rescue — Segment I: Warner Middle School first, Clarenceville second; Segment II: Eagle Elementary first, Gill Elementary second, Kenbrook Elementary third.

- Chain Reaction — Segment III: North Farmington High School first, Harrison High School second; Segment II: Warner Middle School first, Power Middle School second, Clarenceville third.

- Poetic License — Segment II:

Warner Middle School first; Segment I: Larkshire red team first, Larkshire blue team second.

- Decision Structure — Segment III: Harrison High School first, North Farmington High School second.

- Cro-Magnon — Segment II: Dunckel Middle School first, East Middle School second; Power Middle School third; Segment I: Larkshire Elementary first, Eagle Elementary second, Wooddale Elementary third.

Both Eagle and Wood Creek elementaries had kindergarten/first grade teams that competed locally. The Farmington program is coordinated locally by Bonnie Foster.



Allison Frontier, an 11th grader from Farmington High, participated with the North Farmington team during the Decision Structure competition. She is holding the structure that her team entered. It supported 29 1/2 pounds before breaking.

Credit union to stay downtown

By Casey Hane
staff writer

A Farmington-based credit union has elected to stay downtown, building a new office building on property fronting Farmington Road.

The city of Farmington has agreed to sell the Livingston-Oakland Counties Federal Credit Union a portion of a 2-acre parcel on Farmington Road, just south of the Wynnet Condominium cluster complex.

City Manager Robert Deadman estimated the property could bring the city between \$2 or \$2.50 per square foot, or from \$90,000 to \$100,000 per acre.

The credit union is now located on Liberty Street. Directors wanted to buy the entire two acres. This is the acreage remaining following the city sale over the years of portions of the property to the Farmington Tennis Club and a swimming club.

"The credit union wants the full two acres of property . . . we can't accommodate that," Deadman said.

The city council voted unanimously Monday to sell a portion of the property to the credit union, leaving 100-foot frontage on Farmington Road so an abutting, undeveloped parcel can be properly developed in the future.

THE COUNCIL motion stipulates if the credit union does not build within two years, the city can buy back the property at the same price, allowing council members to control the property's use.

A second motion sending the issue of rezoning the property to the planning commission was also approved. Currently zoned R-5 for deluxe multiple housing, the parcel would have to be rezoned to R-1-O, or one family

office district to accommodate the proposed building.

"We should be cautious we don't rezone this for someone else," Councilman Richard Tupper added.

There was discussion about making the zoning contingent on site plan approval, but Deadman and City Attorney Robert Kelly recommended against the "contract zoning" concept. "Generally, it's bad," Kelly said. Deadman added that a zoning tie-in "muddles the water."

The 100-foot, city-owned frontage left on Farmington Road would be used to help in the development of a privately-owned 7-acre parcel to the west, according to Deadman.

"The city has not offered its 2-acre parcel (for sale) . . . as the city was desirous of developing its property in cooperation with the 7-acre parcel to the west," he said in a council report. "The 7-acre parcel only has 100 feet of frontage on Farmington Road whereas the city parcel has over 400 feet of frontage."

THE CITY property sale will give the credit union 500 feet of frontage on Farmington Road.

The credit union is relocating because it has outgrown its current building, according to information from the city.

"They would like to relocate downtown because the majority of their members live in Farmington and Farmington Hills," Deadman added. "They also serve many employees and businesses including the cities, the post office, school district and employees of local businesses."

No further information about the building plans was available from credit union officials.

ANNE KLEIN TRUNK SHOW

Introducing the Anne Klein spring collection, today, February 13, in the Northland Oval Room. An Anne Klein representative will assist you with your selections. Informal modeling from 12 to 6.



HUDSON'S OVAL ROOM