

Students sail through woodshop

BY THE SMITH STAFF WRITER

Woodshop isn't what it used to be, especially at Farmington High School.

All semester long, 32 students in teacher Horshy Card's advanced woods program, parlayed lessons learned in math, physics, social studies and — oh, yeah — woodworking, to create model wood sailboats.

And then, Thursday morning during Student Managed Academic Resource Time, each student put their finished products to the test.

One by one, and with only the force generated by a 20-inch household fan at high speed, the sailboats drifted from one end of a 12-foot-long tank of water to the other.

Student Derrick Kyser finished first in the event, with his sailboat taking only 6.1 seconds to complete the trek. Second-place honors went

to Ben Lukas, whose "pirate" entry included skull-and-crossbones on the sail. Card said the slowest time was about 16 seconds.

Thursday's timed event was only part of the total sailboat competition. Today and tomorrow, judges (administrators, teachers and students) will check out the entries for creativity, craftsmanship, material usage and design, among other categories.

"A couple kids had little ladders on them," Card said. "They really mocked them up pretty well."

Students will also write analytical reports about their projects.

According to Card, the sailboat creations were begun at the beginning of the school year. Students made Styrofoam prototypes, carving shells out of the foam.

Then, they created paper templates that were used as a guide for wood cutting. Other materials included

balsa wood and fiber glass.

The project required that students learn about math and physics skills, including "buoyancy and force of wind on a sail," Card explained.

Although students could pretty much create whatever they wanted, they had specific guidelines to follow for actual size of the models.

The sailboats could be no wider than eight inches, no longer than 16 inches and no taller than 24 inches.

Farmington High School Principal Jim Myers checked out the race. He said he was impressed with the sailboats and the enthusiasm from students about the project.

"The models the kids developed were much better than I anticipated," said Myers, applauding the students for their designs, creative paint jobs and "the amount of work that went into it."

Fan fare: With a household fan supplying all the wind he needed, Farmington High School Junior Nick Galli tests his hand-made miniature sailboat Thursday.



Inspiration from page A1

son, Mike, said. "They were going to earn as they learned." The rest is history. Mike, 30, and his brother, Dan, 27, now run the thriving Bel-Aire Lanes, which is open every day and employs about 14 people. The lanes feature automatic scorekeepers, a bar and a variety of special promotions and games for the whole family.

But the family's business wasn't always located in the Farmington area. Bill Winkler's first bowling alley, with his brother, was Monte Carlo Lanes in Detroit on Plymouth Road. They then bought Bel-Aire Lanes and in 1977 they bought Woodland Lanes in Livonia. In 1980, they purchased Mayflower Lanes.

With four centers, they incorporated and in 1982, they developed Luster Inc., named after their original cleaning business. Today, the family runs Woodland and Bel-Aire Lanes on Orchard Lake Road.

Mike, who lives in Farmington Hills, says bowling is on the comeback. In fact, a recent economic impact study of the bowling industry reveals that the more than 53 million bowlers in the United States generate about \$10 billion annually.

A portion of that revenue goes to the Winkels, a small but locally important part of the country's 6,880 bowling alleys. With most lanes full during the weekend evenings, Mike says there are only open lanes during the day, for the most part.

Nonetheless, there are a lot of challenges in the recreation industry, says Mike. "We're running into the VCR market, Rollerblading, movies, hockey. How do you fight against that?"

Mike and his brother, Dan, of West Bloomfield have initiated several programs to boost patrons' interest in bowling.

"We have coupons, glow in the dark bowling and bumper bowl for kids under the age of 7," explained Mike. Glow in the dark bowling runs on the weekends after 10 or 11 at night.

"They've also tried to work with local schools to introduce the sport of bowling. We worked with the Farmington schools, but that wasn't too successful. It's hard to get into the schools," he said.

Business thrives

Despite competition in the area (Country Lanes is one of two bowling businesses he keeps his eye on), the Winkels' profits have been generally good.

"This year is even better than 1996," Mike said.

Although both of the brothers are relatively young, Mike says they run the lanes well due to their opposite strengths.

"Danny's very efficient in the office and with bookkeeping," said Mike. "I'm big in promotion, advertising and customer relations." A perfect business combo if ever there was one. And even disagreements make for a better business strategy.

"We argue all the time. But we sit down, have a discussion and work it out," said Mike. They also keep their father accessible for consulting.

When they're not overseeing day-to-day operations, each enjoys bowling on a regular basis. Mike, whose average is 180, and Dan, who outscores him by about 30 pins, play about three games per week and bowl on the same league.

"The future of bowling is on the upswing," said Mike.

Gifts with presence

The future of gift shops looks bright, too, especially when one considers the continuous growth

and track record of the business owned by Stella Wingenter and her husband, Harry.

Starting with one small store in Farmington in 1961, the Wingenters now oversee four prosperous gift shops in the metro area.

Stella's story begins in the early 1980s when she had the opportunity to open her Bon Ton Shoppe in the downtown Farmington Center, about a half-mile from her home.

"We had never been in retail and the shopping center accepted her ... it was a miracle," recalled Harry. "We opened the store in 90 days and never had purchased anything, ever."

Harry says the shop's name, Bon Ton, translates to good taste. "Stella wanted something people would remember. It's French, for good style, good breeding," he explained. "She had half the space that was now occupied by a doctor," said Harry, who was an engineer for Chrysler and raised his family in Farmington. Then, three years later when the shopping center expanded, Stella, who now works part time, moved her wares to the opposite side and two doors down from where they are today. Shoppers these days can stroll about 6,000 square feet of space in the Farmington location.

The Wingenters now live in a 105-year-old farmhouse in Fowlerville. Along with Farmington, they run shops in the Brighton Mall (7,000 square feet), where their office headquarters are located; Newburgh Plaza in Livonia; and Prospect Hill in Milford. Their son, Jerry, who lives in Milford, is vice president and operating manager of the 50-employee business.

The family prides itself on

offering unusual home decor items for its customers. And then there are Bonnie Babies. Harry says those are still his most popular item. "But we never know when they're coming or how many," he said, laughing.

Beyond Bonnies, Bon Ton showcases candles, crystal, potpourri, toys, games, men's gifts and more. The stores' Hallmark departments are about 40 percent of the business.

"Folks find they like to come to us because we work very hard to find unique items," said Harry.

Harry knows that choosy shoppers who are looking for just the right candle, crystal vase or picture frame have plenty of shopping options in the sprawling world of gift retail.

"Every lot in town has a store on it, but we don't mind the competition," he said, citing that they were one of the first to open a gift shop that sells both cards and gifts. "In the '60s, retailers had either cards or gifts, one or the other," he said. "But to open a full tilt card and gift business ... wasn't common."

Harry, Stella and Jerry produce two catalogs per year to help increase sales and shopping interest.

"One goes out in the spring and one during the holidays," he said. Potential customers can't order, per say, from the catalog, "but they get an idea of what's in our stores. The catalogs are very productive," he said.

Growing from page A1

Steinkopf, who wasn't born yet.

Today, Steinkopf runs the nursery, which is located on Farmington Road just south of Nine Mile and is open from March 1-Jan. 1, with his wife, Sharon; their three sons, Fred, Jay and John; daughters, Beth and Cindy; and daughter-in-law, Lisa.

"And there's Chris Green, who's like family," added Steinkopf, referring to a 10-year employee. Steinkopf also has 22 grandchildren, a couple of whom help out at the shop now and then.

The nursery and garden center's biggest draw is its landscaping service. Because the Steinkopfs offer landscaping and a garden center, they don't face a lot of competition in the immediate area.

"It takes a lot of hours to run something like this and you almost need a family to do it. We're working 12- and 16-hour days in the summer," Steinkopf said.

Sixty percent of his business is attributed to the retail operation.

Steinkopf, who was born in the home that's on the property and still lives there today, says that when business started, Farmington Road between Eight Mile and Nine Mile roads had about three houses on it. His property features some of his favorite trees, including weeping cherry trees, flowering crab, and the ginkgo, which Fred says isn't planted enough.

"Ginkgos," he said, "are very clean, hearty, unusual trees and don't get a lot of diseases."

The nursery's No. 1 selling tree is the crimson

king maple, which "doesn't outgrow even a small yard," said Steinkopf.

Much of Steinkopf's success is based on the business' longevity and family name. Several of its patrons are the grandchildren of some of the original customers.

"The other day someone brought a receipt in here that my dad wrote up in 1937," he said.

Success also comes from knowing how to appoint specific duties to each of Steinkopf's children.

"If someone shows enthusiasm, then let them give it a try. Children in family businesses should be able to try their expertise out at what they want to do," said Steinkopf, who adds that he loves working with young people because of their eagerness.

Steinkopf's son, John, is a landscape designer who was trained at Ferris State University. Sons Fred and Jay work on landscaping crews and daughter Beth works in the sales area and takes care of the perennials. His wife oversees a lot of the bookkeeping.

Steinkopf, who has been involved with area garden clubs and beautification programs over the years, offers handy advice for those in family businesses or those who are thinking about starting one.

"There are times when it's not the world's best atmosphere, but if we have a problem, we figure it out, more or less," he said. "We each have our own department and area of responsibility and that makes it easier."

Special 1/2 price purchase on beauty certificate only \$65

- True Cystem® permanent wave
- Shampoo, cut and style included
- BONUS: Soothing 30-minute facial and professional makeup application (for manicure and pedicure hand treatment)

Order a certificate by phone or stop by our salon on January 12, 13 and 14 to purchase your Beauty Bonus certificate. Certificate valid through January 31, 1998.

Jacobson's
Birmingham • (248) 644-6900 Livonia • (313) 551-7696 Rochester • (248) 651-0000
MON-SAT 10-9 • OPEN SUN AT NOON

Ron Leal
Spring 1998
Collection Show
and Personal Appearance

Friday, January 16
10 am to 4 pm
Collection Sportsweek

Meet designer Ron Leal, an innovator in the hot Euro-Asian fashion trend, and preview his forward-looking collection. You'll see sophisticated lines, fine attention to details, and an exotic mélange of texture and color.

Jacobson's
Birmingham • 336 W. Maple Rd. • (248) 644-6900
MON-SAT 10-9 • SUN NOON-5