

Kids brush up talents in Odyssey preview

By Casey Hans
staff writer

The dedicated work of 150 Farmington-area students was showcased Saturday during a trial run of the annual "Odyssey of the Mind" competition, designed to help students solve problems in teams.

The Odyssey sneak peek at Farmington High School showed most of the 24 teams participating had the right idea.

Most of the teams — from public and private schools in the Farmington area — are gearing up for a regional competition March 9 with teams from other schools. Teams will compete with students in a similar age categories.

"It's a good opportunity for them to try out a real sense of confidence and accomplishment," said Sylvia Kambouris, a parent coordinating the program with Farmington Public Schools DELTA coordinator Jerry Kaplan. "The basic premise for OM is that each child has something to offer."

PROBLEMS BEING used in this year's OM competition are diverse, including students designing an original performance of the destruction of Pompeii, and teams designing and building battery-powered vehicles which have to do a number of functions.

Students could select from one of the following problems, all of which are timed for eight minutes. For some, students are required to stay within a budget for props and costumes.

• **Omer's Buggy Lite** — A team picks a theme incorporating a light-weight, battery-powered vehicle that the team designs, constructs and drives. The vehicle must attempt to attach, tow and detach from a trailer, travel between specific locations, move in reverse and come to rest in a specified parking place.

• **Give and Go** — Teams create four separate devices that relay tennis balls from different locations into containers. Only one Farmington team, from Kenbrook Elementary, will represent the district in this problem at the regional competition.

• **Pompeii** — This year's most popular problem in Farmington with nine teams, student teams must create and present an original performance from a scene taking place in the ancient city of Pompeii before or during its devastation.

• **Super Collider** — In this physics problem, teams create a balsawood structure which is stacked with weights. The weight stack is hit with a ball, or collider, to cause twisting and vibrations in the structure. The idea is to create the structure that withstands the most weight.

• **Transformation** — Teams create and present a performance which shows a series of real or imaginary changes or evolutions in something, using photographs or drawings showing each phase of transformation.

• **Bedtime Story** — Six elementary student teams from grades kindergarten through two presented their solutions to this problem Saturday, in which they created an original bedtime story that would help someone go to sleep. These students will not participate at the regional competition.

Coaches are volunteer parents. "If you coach, you get really turned on by this," Kambouris said. "They are gaining a lot from it — getting it tough with creativity again."

The Farmington district has had a number of state and regional winners over the years, and last year a team from Warner Middle School won the world OM championship with its creative approach.

This year, teams from the Farmington area are from St. Fabian, Hillside, Hightstown, Our Lady of Sorrows, Larkshire, Longacre, Kenbrook and Eagle elementary schools, Warner, East and Power middle schools, and Harrison, North Farmington and Farmington high schools.



Danielle Bolber looks at her "TV" as Sarah Lash gives a weather forecast during the St. Fabian team's Odyssey of the Mind skit.



Julie Wilson of North Farmington performs as part of a joint team of Harrison and North Farmington students in the Odyssey of the Mind program Saturday. Her team is doing Omer's Buggy Lite.



Kenbrook fourth grader Mike Kwapisz (left) carries tennis ball bins, while classmates Justin Street (center) and Phillip Gasparotto move their props off the gym floor Saturday, after completing their rendition of the Give and Go problem for Odyssey of the Mind.

Council eyes Peltz land as site for new library

By Joanne Mollisowski
staff writer

A decision on whether a portion of the Farmington Hills-owned Peltz land will be reserved for a new Farmington Community Library is expected sometime in February.

But first, the city council wants to hear the verdicts from two architects who are studying whether the 38,000-square-foot Farmington Hills branch should be expanded on its present site or whether another library should be built on a new site, such as the Peltz land, which is south of I-696 and west of Farmington Road.

"We have promised to request a decision as soon as we get the reports," Mayor Aldo Vignone said. "The understanding is that a decision will come in February in time for the parks and recreation millage proposal."

The architectural reviews will be presented to the library board at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 14, at the Farmington Hills branch, 32327 12 Mile.

One of the opinions is expected to come from an architect recommended by Farmington Hills city councilman Ben Marks. The other architect is one chosen by library trustees. Both opinions will be free of charge.

THE ARCHITECTURAL opinions will come about two weeks after the city council and planning commission gave their blessings to the parks and recreation master plan. The city council, however, agreed to fast-track other locations for "active sports" before putting baseball and soccer fields on the hilly, wooded Peltz land, as well as the immediately adjacent Michigan Department of Transportation property.

"The understanding is that a decision will come in February in time for the parks and recreation millage proposal."

By Joanne Mollisowski
Farmington Hills Staff Writer

The city council has added \$1 million to the city's \$4 million bond issue to acquire the Peltz land, which was pulled from the original \$4 million designated for building a new library on a new site.

The city council is expected to vote on the bond issue later this year. The bond issue, which expired in July 1990, will be set at the city council meeting.

Library officials are expected to present a recommendation to the city council following the architects' reports. Library trustees (from left) Ben Marks, who have in the past supported a new square-foot library building, and site plan of sorts, are expected to follow.

"We would need a site development plan to determine how much land would be needed on Peltz for a new library," library director David J. Kaplan said.

For the past, architect John Griesm has created a conceptual plan for a new library, which would sit on a possible larger library on the east side of the Peltz property near Farmington Road.

A SITE PLAN would better determine whether eight acres or perhaps

10 would be needed on Peltz for a new library.

Even if the recommendation is to expand on Peltz and if the city council reserves land to sell to the library board, any decision about building a new facility rests with Farmington and Farmington Hills voters.

Library officials said that the building housing the present Hills branch would be sold should a decision to build a new library be made.

In November 1989, voters defeated a \$14.5 million bond issue to build a new library on the north side of 12 Mile east of Halsted.

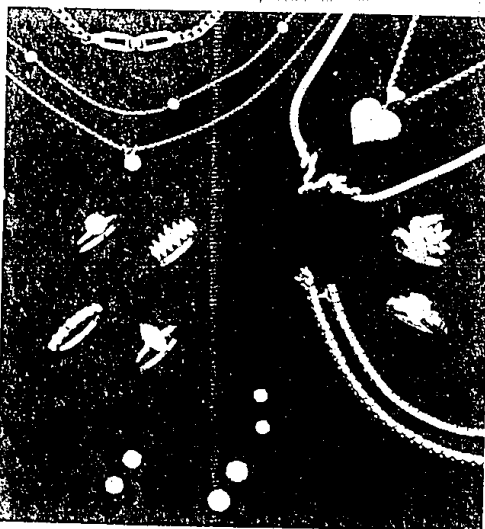
They also defeated a request for a maximum 1.2 mill operating tax which would have allowed the two branch library system to be financed independently of Farmington and Farmington Hills, which finances the library.

In the spring of 1990, the Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils voted 11-1 that building a new library was preferred over expansion. Marks cast the opposing ballot.

Marks said he doesn't believe there has been enough study of expanding the library on its present site, as well as on 2.3 acres of vacant land immediately west of the 12 Mile branch.

Remember Valentine's Day
is Thursday, February 14

Greenstone's is the place to go for all your Valentine's Day needs. We have a large selection of Valentine's cards, gifts, and more. We also have a special Valentine's Day menu. So come in and celebrate with us.



GREENSTONE'S
Gifts, Cards, and More

1000 Woodward Avenue, Birmingham 4 Blocks South of Maple City 35217-2600
Monday-Thursday 9:30 to 5:00