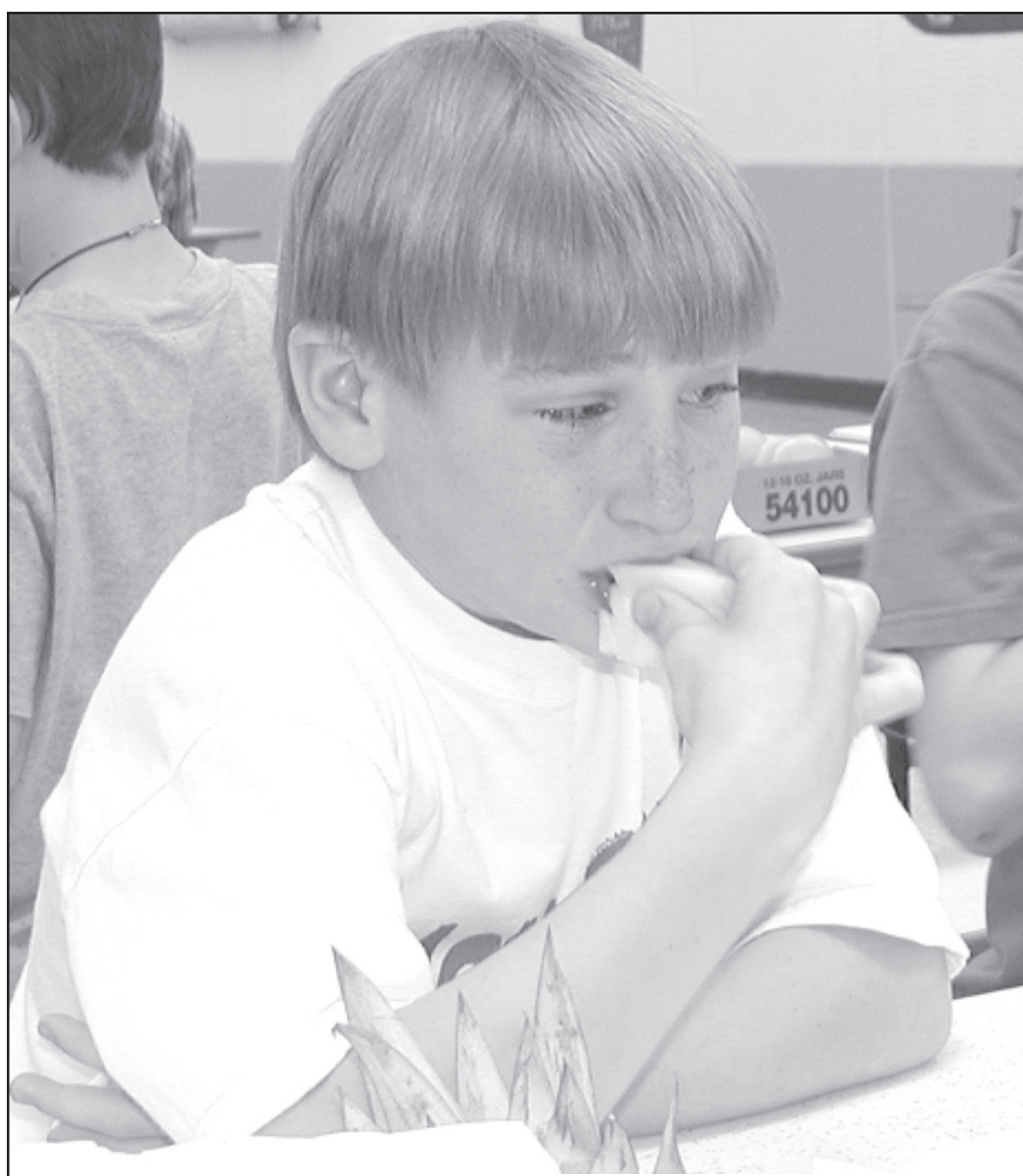




AT THE GRADE SCHOOL Jude Walinder (above right) worked with Robert Ashley to start assembling his and his partner's vehicle for the Lunch Box Derby. Kyle Breth (below) ate a piece of pineapple while he and his partner Dayton Dreher got a game plan down for their car.



Students make fruits, veggies into vehicles

Pineapples, bananas, asparagus, cucumbers, carrots, eggplants, grapefruit, apples, oranges, grapes and just about every other kind of fresh fruit or vegetables a person can think of was turned into cars last week during the Lunch Box Derby at Oberlin Elementary School.

Pairs of fourth and fifth graders made cars out of the fresh produce in the morning and then raced them in the afternoon.

For the most part kids made traditional vehicles with a body and four wheels. They decorated the cars

with radishes, grapes, small white onions and grapes.

Parents got the chance to come in and help their sons and daughters put the vehicles together and then come back in the afternoon to watch them race.

The first Lunch Box Derby was held at the grade school 13 years ago when the Washington Apple Association sponsored it. The group dropped the national event, but Raye's Grocery picked it up and now sponsors the event every year.

As a result, last Wednesday,

Karen Padgett and Mory Zodrow packed up fruits and veggies to take to the grade school.

Each team got to race in two heats. The students placed their cars at the top of the ramp and let 'em go. Some made it to the bottom of the ramp before they started to fall apart; others pulled to the right or left and ended up running into the gym wall, and others got past the center-court line.

Fourth graders Austin Hendrickson and Dylan Barron took most creative with "The Fireball," made out of red peppers. In the fifth grade Alexis Hissong and Sierra Lohofener took most creative with "Hawaiian Punch," made out of a pineapple.

In the race for distance, winners were:

- Fourth graders Rebecca Wentz and Morgan Jansonius, first with "Grandma's Groovy Go-cart," 47 feet; Demi Murray and McKenna O'Hare, second with "Crushing Cucumber," 36 feet and 3 inches; and Regent Erickson and Kaine Fredrickson, third with "Mean Green Speedy Machine," 36 feet.

- Fifth graders Mercedes Geihlsler, Ashley Edgerton and Lara Zodrow, first with "Meroshla Bugee," 40 feet; Chris Anderson and Baron Green, second with "Unleashed, 33 feet and 11 inches and Dan Skibbe and Justin Gee, third with "The Ferocious Cucumber," 33 feet and four inches.



WITH A KNIFE, Brittany Urban (above) cut some fruit for her car while Jamie Soderlund (left) worked on the finishing touches on her car.