



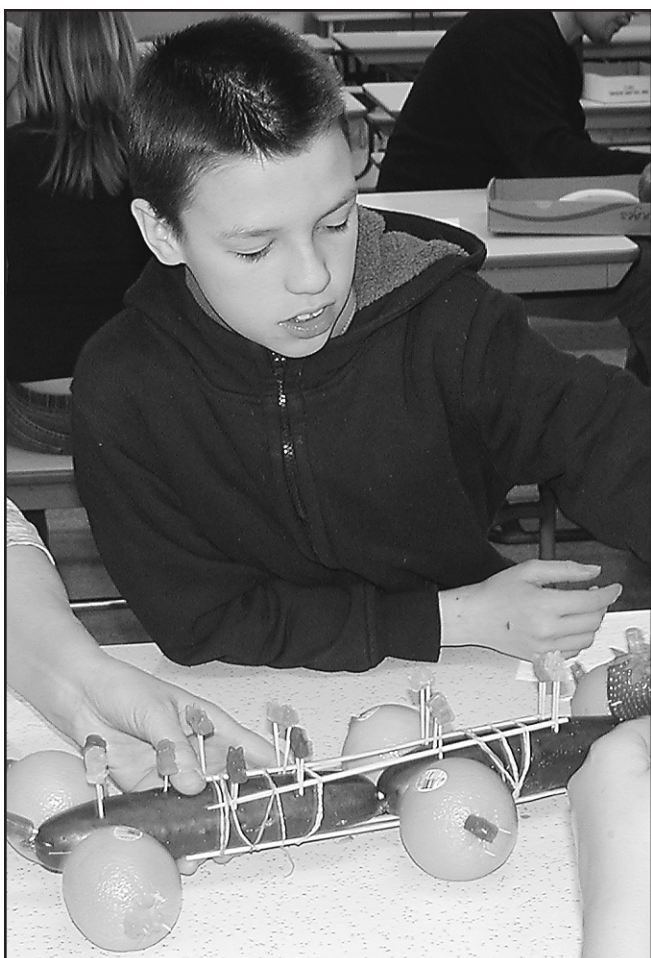
THE "BANANA SPLIT" CAR got grapefruit for its back wheels and oranges for its front. Alana Raile (left) was helped by her mother Valisha last Wednesday to attach the wheels to the banana body with a wooden skewer.

The combination must have worked, because the car assembled by Alana and her partner, Kaitlyn Howland, finished first in the fourth-grade race that afternoon.



NIBBLING ON LEFTOVER PARTS. Trae Woolsey (left) worked with Connor Milton on their veggiemobile, "Fruitfire," during the fifth-grade Lunch Box Derby building session last Wednesday.

– Story and photos by Cynthia Haynes



Students make fun, fruity cars

Call them fast fruit or veggie vehicles, the cars that Oberlin Elementary School fourth and fifth graders made on Wednesday were both edible and raceable.

The annual Lunch Box Derby, sponsored by Raye's Grocery, allowed the students to work in groups of two or three – with a little help from parents and teachers – to make vehicles out of fruit and vegetables provided by the store.

The fourth graders started their projects at 9 a.m. in the school lunchroom. About an hour later, it was the fifth graders' turn to make their fruitmobiles.

On a table by the door, Raye's employees spread out their bounty – bananas, pineapples, strawberries, grapefruit, kiwis, asparagus, oranges, apples, grapes, melons, cucumbers, celery, squash.

You name it; if it can be found in the produce department, it was there.

The store also provided pickles, olives, raisins, gummy fruit, cocktail onions, maraschino cherries and other small canned items so the kids could put drivers in the vehicles and add some decorations.

With the students choosing the ingredients and the adults wielding the knives and skewers to put everything together, the cars took form quickly.

Then came the tasks of trimming them and adding those last few important touches – a cherry or an onion for the driver? And how about some celery leaves for hair?

Each team got their picture taken with the creation. Later, those pictures will be displayed at Raye's.

Then at 1 p.m., it was race time. How far can a car with oranges for wheels really go?

Well, pretty far as it turns out.

The winners of this year's races were:

Fourth Grade

First – "The Banana Split" by Alana Raile and Kaitlyn Howland, 28 feet.

Second – "The Dominator" by Jesse Isbell and Hunter May, 25 feet, 1 inch.

Third – "The Punisher", by Gage Van Meter and John Burmaster, 20 feet, 8 inches.

Most Creative – "The Shredder" by Tristan Salem and James Ohlert.

Fifth Grade

First – "Super Troopers" by Colton Ketterl, Dawson Kempt and Kalen Townsend, 29 feet, four inches.

Second – "The Cruiser" by Kennedy Jensen and Courtlyn Waterman, 27 feet.

Third – "The Tropicana" by Skyler Brown and Hannah Willis, 25 feet, nine inches.

Most Creative – "Fruit Pool" by Amy Wentz, Sage Lohofener and Kimmi Strohm.



IT TOOK CONCENTRATION to get the things just right, and Alana Meitl (above) was up to the task as she affixed a strawberry to a piece of pineapple on top of a watermelon base last Wednesday. Earlier, fourth-grader Joshua Russ (left) was about finished with an extra-long two-cucumber car.