

'Found object' construction wins \$1,000, makes breakfast

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With each turn of his pedals, Jacob Zucker got a little closer to his goal of simultaneously grinding coffee and making fresh juice.

As Jacob, 17, pedaled faster Saturday, his Oak Ridge High School classmates gave him a friendly reminder that he needed to slow down, for fear of damaging the delicate construction of their "Wangtek" coffee maker and juicer.

The artistic invention, named for classmate Stephanie Wang, was the first-prize winner of the Orlando Science Center/Goldman Kinetic Challenge 2003. The science center and the Stephen H. Goldman Foundation sponsored the contest. Participants were challenged to create artistic kinetic sculptures from only "found objects."

"Since we built the project over at her house, we decided to call it Wangtek," said junior Karl Henkle, 16.

For taking home first prize, the Wangtek creators were awarded \$1,000 for their science class. Their prize money will be presented Feb. 17 during a reception for the contestants and their families.

"Upon approval from my principal, I promised my kids we'll take them to Busch Gardens," the group's advance-placement physics teacher Nirmala Ramlakhan said of at least one plan to celebrate their victory.

She said she also will use some of the prize money to buy new equipment for the physics class.

Jacob and his classmates beat out 13 other groups, whose sculptures ranged from a spinning palm tree to a robot.

For Kristi Mohr and her Chain of Lakes Middle School friends, the contest meant taking advantage of her parents' decision to get rid of an old dishwasher. The group took the retired Hotpoint and converted it into a ball-washing machine.

Using the washer's original pump, the students forced water to shoot through a small piece of plastic pipe and turn a wheel made of old Tinker Toys at the top of the washer. As the Tinker Toy wheel began to spin, a makeshift water wheel also was set in motion, scooping small balls from a pool of water at the bottom of the washer.

The "Wash It Work" dishwasher-turned-kinetic sculpture captured second prize — a \$250 gift certificate for the team and a field trip to the science center.

The judges, including a Lockheed Martin engineer, described the 14 entries as "impressive." Each sculpture was judged on its movement, appear-



PHOTOS BY BOBBY COKER/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Pedal power. Judge Bob Wilson watches the Oak Ridge High team's 'Wangtek' machine in action. Student Jacob Zucker provides the power, while teacher Nirmala Ramlakhan keeps tabs on the combination coffee grinder-juicer maker.

ance and power source. The students' only limitations, contest sponsor Stephen Goldman said, were their imaginations and ability to find the right junk they would need to make their sculpture move and look good at the same time.

"I'm pretty impressed," Goldman, a retired business executive, local philanthropist and interim head of the science center, said of the entries. He said the contest was designed to allow students to be creative with their schoolwork and see how much of a connection exists between science and art.

He added that applying what the students were reading in books to a real-world project also would give them a far better understanding of what they were learning.

Goldman said he hopes to make the contest an annual event.

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Household leftovers. Kristi Mohr of Chain of Lakes Middle School peers inside a converted dishwasher to check out a temporary malfunction.