

Kohl's gets OK to open early after Thanksgiving

By KOREN TEMPLE

Get ready for the early bird sales the day after Thanksgiving, Kohl's got the OK to open its doors at 5 a.m.

The planning commission approved a conditional use permit on Oct. 24 to allow the store, at the intersection of Hamilton Avenue and Almarida Drive just off Highway 17, to open an hour earlier for its annual holiday sale.

"We are just asking for that one day of the year to open early, which is becoming a standard for many stores," said Jeff Adams, site development manager for Kohl's.

Kohl's is one of a number of stores in Campbell having day-after Thanksgiving door-busters. Mervyns on W. Hamilton Ave. and Fry's Electronics on E. Hamilton Avenue open at 5 a.m. every year, and both stores will continue that trend as holiday shopping kicks off with its traditional day-after Thanksgiving promotions.

Other chain stores in the area, such as Big 5 and Bed, Bath and Beyond, didn't have information on what time they would open, but store managers indicated they planned to open early. Information on hours will be posted outside the stores in the coming weeks.

Commissioners acknowledged many stores in the area do participate in the shopping spectacle, but questioned if it would stir up complaints from the public.

"What happens if the national trend is to stay open all night long? As we move forward, it can keep getting worse and worse," Planning Commissioner Michael Rocha said.

However, the planning department informed the commission the police department had received only minor complaints from residents since the store opened. Those complaints pertained to the vacuum sweeper working in the parking lot before 6 a.m.

Kohl's representatives said they contract out the work and would speak with the company.

"They seem to be a good neighbor," said Commissioner Bob Roseberry.

Discussion did arise about the actual hours the employees work in the store, which clouded the meaning of hours of operations. The representatives for Kohl's understood that to mean when the doors were open to the

• Page 11

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

News	5	Business	25
Opinion	14	Gardening	27
Community	17	Calendar	29
Schools.....	21	Sports	31

Community Classifieds

An affordable alternative to high-priced classifieds

The Campbell Reporter

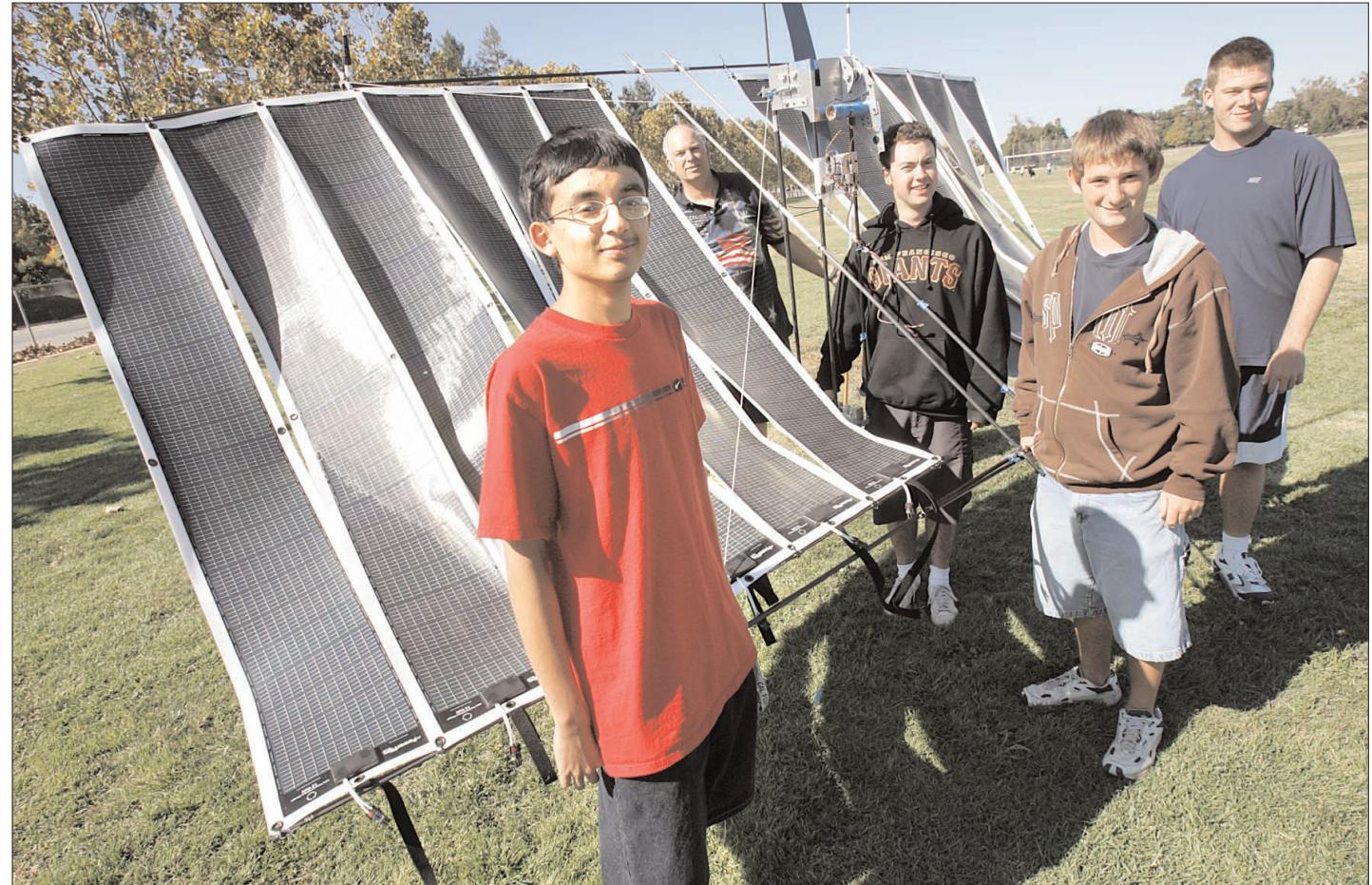


Volume 7, Issue 33

www.campbellreporter.com

November 1, 2006

Big Dollars: Campbell City Council candidates have plenty to spend this year **10**



Photograph by Jacqueline Ramseier

Touch the Sky: The Lite Won team (from left) Mithil Munshi, coach Larry Grattan, Evan Johnson, Joey Carolan and Jeffrey Grattan demonstrated what Silicon Valley innovation is about. The Westmont High School teens clocked the second fastest time in the X Prize Cup competition with their space elevator.

Stairway to Heaven

Westmont teens show their stuff

By ALICIA UPANO

Larry Grattan packed his Honda Odyssey van with a tube of carbon fiber rods, flexible solar panels rolled up into two 5-gallon buckets, a mess of tools in plastic bags and tackle boxes, and countless zip ties. He was on his way to New Mexico for a futuristic adventure.

His son, Jeffrey, and Jeffrey's three friends from Westmont High School had created something larger than the sum of its parts, the prototype of a new form of space travel—the space elevator, a device that may one day climb its way into outer space.

While the device is rooted in science fiction, namely Arthur C. Clarke's Fountains

of Paradise, recent advancements have made the space elevator a possibility. The space elevator is envisioned as a ribbon or tether extending from Earth into outer space, carrying people and cargo, and reducing the transport cost from \$20,000 per pound to below \$100 per pound.

So Grattan took this disassembled space elevator, or climber, to a place where its reality was closest and most lucrative—the Space Elevator Games at the 2006 X Prize Cup in Las Cruces, N.M.

He, his brother Alan, an engineer, and nephew Zane left the Bay Area on Oct. 14, a sunny Saturday morning. They made their way south, through Palm Springs, the Arizona desert, past Phoenix, stopping in Tucson. Finally, they arrived in Las Cruces, where teams from around the world converged for the \$200,000 purse.

The team's four teens—Jeffrey, Evan Johnson, Joey Carolan and Mithil Munshi,

all from Campbell—trickled in throughout the week.

From the beginning, the Westmont team was of a different ilk. Its members were the youngest competitors out of the 12 participating teams, which came from major U.S. and international colleges, such as the University of Michigan and Max Born College from Germany or designed by professional engineers. In contrast, the Westmont boys had just taken their PSATs.

Other teams brought in intricately designed climbers, working with corporate sponsors who paid their \$500 entry fee and about \$10,000 to build their devices. As their competitors had to fit together a mass of parts, Grattan had only to unpack the van, arrange the carbon fiber rods, unroll the solar panels, and fasten the panels with zip ties. The team used a model airplane motor to make the climber move.

• Page 12

Into the Future

► Page 1

Chalk one up for the home team, because after a series of snafus that plagued other teams, including the German team's materials being held up in customs and Spain's device lost somewhere over Kentucky via UPS, the field began to narrow. Out of the 12 teams, only six remained in the competition after the pre-competition qualifications.

Suddenly the Westmont team, Lite Won, emerged as a dark horse. Yet the boys took it all in stride.

The night before the Space Elevator Games, Jeffrey and Evan ate beef chow fun, one of Jeffrey's favorites, at the P.F. Chang's China Bistro in El Paso, Texas. Mithil and Joey, after helping the climber qualify for the competition, returned home to Campbell. Mithil had to take the PSAT, and Joey, a football player, was anxious to play in the Warriors' homecoming.

Jeffrey and Evan had flown in earlier that day, with Jeffrey's mother, Cathy, and younger brother, Gregory. Jeffrey, like his father, is quiet but confident. Evan, however, acknowledged he was excited and nervous. The boys spent the day scoping the competition in Las Cruces, 40 miles away from El Paso, and appeared fearless.

Another puzzle

The space elevator was just another challenge for the teens, another puzzle to be solved. Jeffrey and Joey have been inventing devices for the Tech Museum of Innovation's annual Tech Challenge since fifth grade at Capri Elementary School. Evan and Mithil joined the team when the four attended Rolling Hills Middle School.

Now juniors at Westmont, they've spent the years tinkering in the Grattans' Steinway Avenue garage, creating a device that could hypothetically crawl up jungle vines to the top of Amazon tree lines and another that could put out wildfires.

These inventions won them top prizes and a \$100 U.S. savings bond each at the Tech Challenges in 2003, 2004 and 2005. Last year, when the team failed to win any awards, the teens opted to move on and move up.

Taking it to the next level was exactly where Jeffrey wanted to be. "You're against the best," he says. "It's harder, more challenging."

The idea, however, was his father's, after he attended the 2005 Space Elevator Games at Moffett Field in Mountain View. In the event's inaugural year, not one team could make its device climb the 55-meter (about 180 feet) tether.

His wife, over a plate of Chinese food, remembers his return from the event and how disappointed her husband was that nobody had achieved this feat. That's when she said, "You guys can do it," and the team signed up.

The Moffett Field location was changed to Las Cruces, but the team was not deterred. The boys continued to work on designs, incorporating solar energy concepts into what they had learned working with model airplanes.

"I've always liked things that fly," Grattan says.

Gliders, radio and model airplanes

► Page 13



Stage 1: Westmont High School junior Evan Johnson (left) and Jeffrey Grattan fasten flexible solar panels to their team's space elevator for the 2006 X Prize Cup competition. The prize was \$200,000.



Photographs by Alicia Upone

Carry On: It was all about local pride. The Westmont High School teens carry their climber (left) onto the tarmac at Las Cruces International Airport, where it waits (right) for its turn to go up a 55-meter or 180-foot tether. The device reached the top in 2 minutes 2 seconds, the second fastest time.

CITY BEAT

Into the Future

• Page 12

taught him about aerodynamics, engine mechanics, and making devices both light and powerful. His brother can still remember the large contraption Grattan constructed growing up in Monte Sereno while attending Westmont High School. The homemade structure would hover, and it tickled the neighborhood kids to watch.

"He should've been the engineer," Alan Grattan says.

Instead, Grattan's a real estate broker who discovered his hobby matched well with his son's interests. Jeffrey wants to be an aeronautical engineer and go to Stanford University.

Evan, on the other hand, is undecided, but dreams of going to UCLA. He is involved in the school's Associated Student Body, and his mother envisions him as a great manager. Mithil, as the teens' mothers describe him, is a math genius who's destined to be a doctor. He wants to be a neurologist. Joey, like Jeff, is on the football team, and enjoys the intricacies of technical projects, but thinks his future is in business. In all, they're not your average teenage boys, says Elaine Johnson, Evan's mother.

Desert heat

They were definitely not in Campbell anymore. In New Mexico, the travelers discovered geodes and arrowheads, tarantulas, rattlesnakes and frog-sized grasshoppers.

Dubbed the Land of Enchantment, New Mexico is also the site of the first U.S. missile test and space launch, and a hub for aerospace development. The X Prize Cup, held at a closed Las Cruces International Airport, was a space lover's dream.

The competition's first day, Oct. 20, included a visit from space explorer Anousheh Ansari, a lunar-lander competition and talk of commercial space flights by 2008. More than 20,000 people turned out for the events and competitions, eating roasted corn and turkey legs, while watching rockets launch into the clear sky.

"Straight as an arrow," a commentator says over the loudspeaker. "Like a bat out of hell," he adds.

Despite the overall excitement, the day was a disappointment for space elevator participants and aficionados. The tether, stretched to its full length of 55 meters by a crane, spun like a birthday party streamer in the wind. This did not bode well for the qualifying teams, who built devices like wings, kites and, in the Westmont team's case, a sail.

Teams waited for the wind to calm, and onlookers stationed patiently at the gate of the games waited with cameras and video cameras, having come from all over the country for the event.

The media also covered the games, including major TV networks, NOVA scienceNOW, the BBC, documentary film makers from New Mexico State University, and photographers representing publications in Germany and France.

At the end of the day, only one team got a shot. The University of Michigan's climber made history by being the first team to crawl to the top. Unfortunately, the climber took 6 minutes 40 seconds, exceeding the 1 meter per second rule that was required to win the hefty purse.

So Lite Won packed up and made its way back to El Paso, since all the Las Cruces



Photograph by Alicia Upano

Going Up: Westmont High School students journeyed to the X Prize Cup competition in Las Cruces, N.M. They were the only high school team at the event. Their device (pictured here) had to reach the top of a 180-foot tether attached to a crane.

hotels were booked. Over ribs at The State Line Smokehouse & Grill, they drew on napkins, brainstorming how to improve their climber, how to shield it against the wind. Lite Won was determined to win.

Game on

They left El Paso early the next morning, armed with new ideas on how to use the wind and sun to their advantage. The sun was just peeking over the horizon, painting the Southwest landscape red, then green, then brown. They made their way into the Chihuahuan desert between the rugged Organ Mountains to the south and plateaus to the north.

The wind was low in early morning and teams lined up to the tether. University of British Columbia's Snow Star couldn't make its device go.

"This one will work," says Jeffrey's

cousin Zane, pointing to Lite Won's climber. "I've seen it go up."

Then, the German team from Max Born College attempts a climb. Their climber, Turbo Crawler, was the heaviest climber at 25 kilos. They are also a young team—17- and 18-year olds—but there are 18 of them. Their crawler wouldn't climb.

Evan and Jeffrey watch these attempts from the tarmac. The teenagers are wearing their Westmont junior class shirts that read "Catch Us If You Can" on the back. They admit they've fantasized about what they would do with the \$200,000 prize. Jeffrey would buy a car, he says, and Evan jokes that he would go to Disneyland. No, he says, he would really put the money in the bank.

It's Lite Won's turn. Grattan checks the wind conditions; it's still mid-morning and calm. He looks up toward the sun.

"The sun's getting better for us," Grattan

tells his brother.

"You're just going to have to go for it, Larry," Alan replies.

Grattan agrees. They've come this far, and Lite Won is either going to go, or it's not, he says.

And it goes.

Jeffrey commands the climber with a radio controller. Evan peers up, guiding him along. "Almost there," Evan says. "Keep going."

The climber reaches the top in 5 minutes and 31 seconds, faster than the only other team at that point to reach the top, MClimber from University of Michigan.

The Kansas City Space Pirates and the University of Saskatchewan are next up, but don't make it.

By the afternoon, the University of Saskatchewan is the first team to get another shot. The judges will take the highest score from two attempts. The university teamed up with the Spanish team, whose climber was lost by UPS.

On the second run, the joint efforts enable the climber to reach the top in 58 seconds.

"We may see a winner," says Roger Gilbertson, Spaceward Foundation volunteer and commentator at the Space Elevator Games. The German team tries again, reaching the top in 3 minutes 27 seconds.

The Westmont team also gets another run, and the team reconvenes to replace wheels torn on the first run. The team changes gears for speed, and tilts the solar panels to the sun. The team hopes its climber, in a higher gear and with more power, will reach the top in a winning time.

Lite Won's up again, moving smoothly spaceward as the audience claps.

"Go Warriors!" Cathy says.

"Go Lite Won!" Gregory says.

The crowd joins in, even the other teams, whistling and chanting, "Go, go, go, go!"

Lite Won makes it to the top in 2 minutes 2 seconds, less than half its previous run. It was the second fastest time.

"You guys were awesome," says a man in the crowd.

"Where you guys from?" another spectator inquires.

"Campbell," Evan says.

"California?"

"Yeah."

The X Prize Cup ends, with no clear winner. The six qualifying teams are invited to another site for a final run as judges decide on the Saskatchewan's 58-second run.

The next day, Lite Won runs the climber in sixth gear, but it ends up frying the switches and the contraption won't move. The judges decide Saskatchewan is three seconds over the mark, using the 1-meter per second rule.

The \$200,000 prize remains unclaimed, and will grow to \$500,000 next year.

Grattan says, "We almost won this thing."

For Gilbertson, a high school team's entry is unusual, but it illustrates the competition's larger goal—to spur private innovation and to inspire the coming generations.

"They're here to work as a team, to do something larger than themselves and change the future," Gilbertson says. "They've done an awesome job, and they made their place in history."

While the team has yet to decide if it will compete next year, its work inspired seventh-grader Jordan Ford from Madison, Ala., who came to the Space Elevator Games with his father, Jeff.

"I want to do this next year," Jordan says. "I'd do it tomorrow if I could."