

Home-schooled team ties for first in Destination Imagination test

By Judy Hill

The INDEPENDENT inter-

viewed Roman Mattus, 15, of Vernonia, back in April about his Oregon Home Education

Network Destination ImagiNation team, which had just won the state DI championship. The

home-schooled team, their managers and parents were gearing up to travel to the University of Iowa at Ames for the DI Global Finals.

Mattus said then, "I believe my team is a fine example of what youth today are capable of accomplishing."

True enough. The seven-member team has returned victorious, tied for first place with Michigan's Coon Rapids High School in the DI Global Finals, held at Ames, Iowa, May 24-27. They competed against 27 teams in their division. Their wins on the state and global levels represent firsts for a home-schooled DI team.

The team, coached by Team Managers and moms Christine Webb and Lori Raymond in Webb's North Plains garage, had to raise \$10,000 in just six weeks in order to afford the trip to Ames.

Denise Mattus said everyone connected with the team was incredibly busy during those six weeks. There were car washes, a spaghetti feed, sales of chocolate covered cherries and a huge garage sale of donated items. Cash donations helped, too.

"People were really generous," said Raymond.

Over 8,000 kids, in 700 teams from around the world, were present at the competition. Some 20 teams were home-schooled groups. The DI web site estimates that over 15,000 people attended the events.

DI, an outgrowth of Odyssey of the Mind, encourages and rewards creativity, teamwork and problem solving. OM Association, Inc., the non-profit organization that sponsors DI, encourages creativity and divergent thought in a world obsessed with "the right answer." Its yearly challenges to teams, from kindergarten through college, involve projects that support creativity and teamwork.

Tournaments are held at different levels, and consist of two parts related to a yearly theme. In the Instant Challenge category, teams are given a scenario to problem solve. They must brainstorm the solution in four minutes and perform it for

the judges in three minutes.

The second part of the competition involves a longer term project called a Team Challenge. The 2000 DI theme was "Food for Thought." Teams choose from six sub-categories such as "It's not Impastable!," "Fruit Roller Coaster" and "Instant Pudding Improv," each of which represented a different type of problem solving scenario.

The OHEN team chose "Eggsploration," an obstacle course challenge through which five raw eggs must pass unbroken. The presentation had to be in the form of an artistic skit, possibly including a plot, costumes, music and a spontaneous element added by the judges at the last minute. The teams are judged not only on how well they interpret the challenge but also on humor and spontaneity. Fun is a big part of DI.

In addition to Mattus, the champion team members include Jake Edmonds, Aloha; Lauren and Alaina Grimm, North Plains; Caitlin and Matthew Letts, Beaverton; and Keegan O'Connor, SW Portland.

Raymond said that after a summer break, the team and managers will assemble in the fall to begin work on the next DI challenge. Only this time they will have a whole year to plan and perfect their act.

Kids' activities at Head Start

Summer youth activities offered at Vernonia Head Start include the following program for July 10-19:

July 10 - Cooking, Gardening, Drama, and Music

July 11 - Ceramics 9:30-11:30 Kindergarten, 1st grade

July 12 - Ceramics 9:30-11:30 3rd, 4th grades

July 13 - Ceramics 9:30-11:30, 5th, 6th grades

July 17 - Cooking, Gardening, Drama, and Music

July 18 - Bike Safety with Vernonia City Police 9:30-11:30 All ages.

July 19 - Biking 9:00-12:00 Kindergarten through 2nd grade, bring your own lunch.



Destination Imagination team is shown at the Global Finals in front of their self-propelled obstacle course for eggs. In back row from left are Caitlin Letts, Jake Edmonds, Matthew Letts and Alaina Grimm; front from left are Roman Mattus, Lauren Grimm and Keegan O'Connor.

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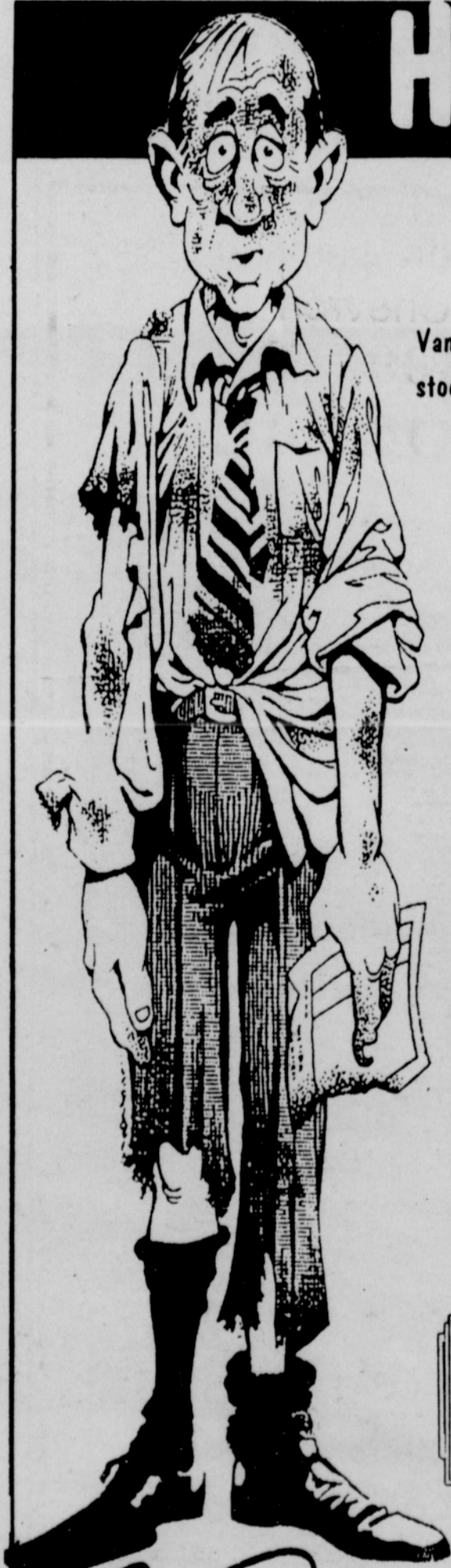
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