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## Rube Goldberg at Stanley: Some Assembly Required

Cathy Dausman



From left: First place winners Max Franz, Aidan McNamara, Tyler Shenone, Ryan Nall Photos Cathy Dausman

would do. Then marbles rolled down inclines, knocked over dominoes, spun into bowls and pushed toy cars with lethal pitchforks toward unsuspecting balloons.

And yes, plenty of mousetraps were used.

Ideally, the machines worked with little human intervention. Realistically, some "nudges" were inevitable, but the audience of parents and siblings loved every moment leading up to resounding balloon pops. Eighth-graders Morgan Shepherd, Olivia Carver and Reilly Webster originally formed a team as a joke, but soon got into the spirit of the competition.

They estimate they spent 24 hours "tinkering with friends" after school. Their efforts earned them a second-place finish. First place was awarded to the sixth-grade team of Ryan Nall, Tyler Schenone, Max Franz and Aidan McNamara and their sturdy lime green contraption. Fiona Burrows, Stella Sowarby and Clare Fonstein took third place; Ivan Dikov and Isaac Douglas earned honorable mention.

You can view other Rube Goldberg contraptions in action online at:

<http://mousetrapcontraptions.com/>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/RubeGoldbergTV>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qybUFnY7Y8w>

<http://tinyurl.com/6o5bejr>

Two balloons. Three judges. Ten steps. Ten contestants.

Add cardboard tubes, plastic, string, needles and pins, assorted toy cars, mousetraps and dominoes, confetti, and two dozen Stanley Middle School students, stir, and you've got the 2012 Rube Goldberg contest.

Rube who?

Reuben L. Goldberg, a San Francisco native, U.C. Berkeley engineer and Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist who loved to complicate the simplest of tasks. Remember the 1960's vintage Mousetrap game? That's Rube Goldberg at his finest.

Science teacher Mike Meneghetti developed the contest 12 years ago at a parent's request. It became a scaled down version of a similar contest held at Purdue University. The Stanley contest runs every other year. "Students are given a set of rules about what the machine [they build] must do," he said. "The theme this year is 'Party Time.' The goal is to pop two balloons."

To honor Goldberg, every momentum-fueled move is designed to be complex. Students paired their "I don't do Simple" Goldberg t-shirts with colorful wigs, glasses, noses or hats, and the games began. Each group explained, step by step, what they hoped their homemade contraption

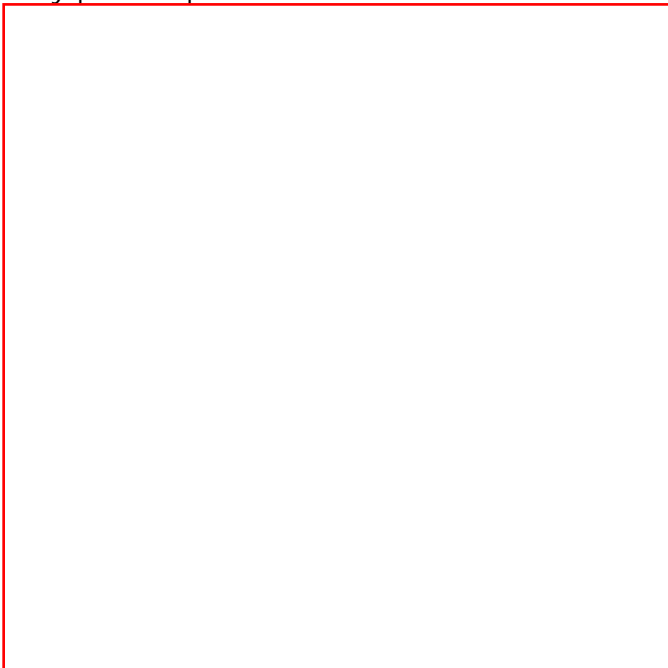


From left: Second place team Morgan Shepherd, Olivia Carver, Reilly Webster



The winners of third place

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