

~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

Rube Goldberg challengers eat the competition for breakfast

By Cathy Dausman



Photos Cathy Dausman

Eleven teams of science students shied away from “simple” in their quest to design the most convoluted mechanical cereal dispenser ever during the 2018 Rube Goldberg Challenge at Stanley Middle School March 28.

Rueben Garrett Lucius Goldberg, aka “Rube,” was no rube by any means. The Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist was a Yankee Doodle Dandy (he was born on the Fourth of July) and Cal Bear. Although Goldberg died in 1970, his legacy endures in the form of an annual Rube Goldberg challenge

for science and tech minded students ranging in age from middle school through college.

Stanley’s contestants are volunteers from Mike Meneghetti’s engineering and robotics classes. Judges are provided by Lafayette Partners in Education. Meneghetti developed the program 18 years ago; competitions are held every other year.

As contestant Maggie Conklin promised, this year’s challenge was “the most complex way to start your day.” Contestants milked their moment in the limelight and their

audience ate it all up.

Alarm clocks were given a final alignment, cars and trains straightened in their tracks, strings tightened and cereal packages were locked and loaded. Suddenly it was snap! crackle! pop! as the Cocoa Crispies, Apple Jacks, Cheerios and Fruit Loops flew into bowls.

After 20 to 40 hours of teamwork, it was over in a matter of seconds. “It’s a privilege doing this,” said Meneghetti, who continues to emcee the contest. When it comes to Rube Goldberg, clearly nobody does it simple!



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