

AHS student strikes gold

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"It (the scenario) was a home had been burned down, and all that was left was the foundation," said Van Oosten. "We had to design a new two-storey house to be built on that foundation, and meet the needs of the family."

The competition consisted of two six-hour sessions. The first day, Van Oosten worked on his design, and at the end of the allocated six hours, was confident he'd met all the needs of the project.

"What we didn't know was we were given that same plan the next day, and we had to rework our plans to make a number of changes that the 'family' had decided upon. It meant taking apart what we had designed the day before, and making it work. It was a pain in the butt that the 'customer' wanted so many changes."

Acton High School technological design teacher Norbert Axtmann accompanied Van Oosten for the competition, and was quite pleased with Van Oosten's showing.

"On the first day, I was concerned that Jon was a bit hung at first, but after an hour into it (competition) I could see he was on his way," said Axtmann, "The second day, he was flying."

"Having to make changes from his original drawings was a means of mak-

ing the competition more 'real,'" continued Axtmann. "In the real world, it's rare to draw a set of plans that the client doesn't want to change somewhere in the process. I was pleased how Jon pulled it all together."

What made winning the gold more significant was the fact Van Oosten was the youngest competitor in his category, with the others in Grade 12 or community college, and also the fact that he hasn't taken any architectural technology and design classes since Grade 10, as he couldn't work that class into his Grade 11 timetable this year.

Weeks before the nationals, Van Oosten and Axtmann hit the sketch pad, the books and the keyboard, going through different design scenarios, construction details and studying current residential style trends, to be as up to date as possible.

"When I heard them announce Ontario as the gold winner I was flying," said Axtmann. "It's been a long time coming and I was so pleased with Jon."

Over the years, Axtmann and his technological design students have put Acton High School on the map, with six silver medals at the national level.

With the gold, Van Oosten has the bragging rights of being the best in Canada, and is already making plans to compete next year.



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