

High school competition tests computer programming skills

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

WINDSOR – A computer programming competition designed to test the skills of high school students drew more than 100 participants to the University of Windsor Dec. 8.

Thirteen schools, each represented by two or three teams, competed against each other in the third annual event.

Participation dramatically increased since last year, when the event drew only about 30 students.

“Computer programming is a big thing right now,” said Margaret Mayer-McKnight, one of the organizers of the event. “It sparks an interest with the students and they get a lot of enjoyment out of it. It doesn’t cost them any money to come here and they can learn a little, have a lot of fun and they can compete. With 100 students coming, compared to 30 last year, it shows that they’re interested in this field and this gives them the opportunity to have some hands-on exposure to it.”

Two teams of six students from Essex District High School attended the

event.

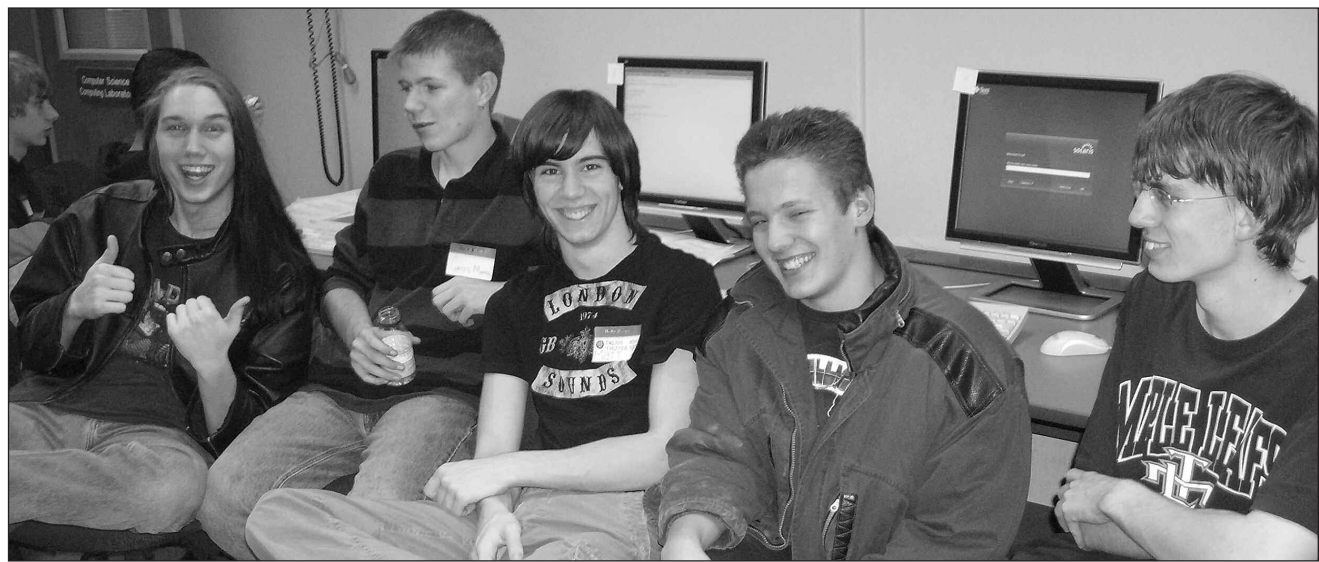
Elwin Kuley, who teaches computer science classes for students in grades 10 to 12 at EDHS, said although the students were unsure about what to expect from the competition, they were enthusiastic about testing their skills behind a keyboard.

“It not only exposes the kids to the programming language at a higher level than just what they’d do in the classroom, but they get to see their peers with the same motivation as they do to enjoy programming,” Kuley said. “So they are impressed when they come and say, ‘Hey, there’s kids like me here too.’”

All participating students were invited to the university for two training sessions last month.

During the competition, students were asked to complete a series of questions, using any programming language to test their problem solving abilities.

Although Kuley was not allowed to guide the students during the competition, he said the criteria were deeply rooted in difficult math and tougher than anything his students had



Essex District High School’s computer programming team takes a breather Friday after participating in a competition organized by the University of Windsor. The third annual event tested more than 100 high school students’ computer programming skills. From left: Robert McCloskey, Curtis Makish, Matt Shaheen, Alex Hamilton and Brendon Armstrong.

experienced in the classroom.

“It’s definitely a challenge,” Kuley said. “It’s also a learning experience – a self-test and an eye-opener. This may give the kids an idea if they can really become programmers.”

Another benefit to the competition is that students get the opportunity to experience life at the university level, said organizer Adlane Habel, an assistant professor of computer science.

“After they finish high school, at least after this

competition, they have an idea of what’s going on at a university,” Habel said. “When they came during the first workshop, they got to see what types of equipment we have here and they communicated with students and professors and were given answers to different questions they had about our programs.”

After the competition, organizers held an award ceremony for all participants.

EDHS Grade 12 student and team member Curtis

Makish said the questions, which involved the manipulation of numbers, were “very difficult.”

Red Raider News

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

New this year is the “Ripped Raiders” workout group – a club for students to workout in the weight room after school to improve speed, strength, and endurance.

On December 5, the Essex Planetears traveled to Flat Rock, Mich. to attend the State of the Strait Conference. The Planetears

learned about how scientists monitor wildlife in the area.

On Dec. 6, the Arts Department at the school held an evening of “Arts Alive!” where parents could examine the arts and talents of students. The night consisted of music, dance, poetry and art presentations.

The Leadership class, student council and senior students will be embarking on a town-wide can drive Dec. 18. Students will be going

out into the community from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to pick up any cans that are left on our neighbour’s porches.

Students will be celebrating the holiday season with some special events this year. There will be a door decorating contest, a canned food drive, a Christmas variety show, a toy drive, and a gingerbread house building contest. Students will also be served an amazing breakfast by the Entrepreneurial

Class on Dec. 22.

Schools interested in joining the can drive should contact EDHS to pick up any cans you collect from your schools.

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