

Reach for the Top team provincial champs

When it comes to getting the facts straight, the North Dundas District High School Reach for the Top team is a set of walking encyclopedia.

The team, consisting of Kevin McCargar, Heather Giles, Nadine Mayhew, Rob Wallbridge and Natasha Harwood, have proven their expertise in trivia, recently winning the high school quiz show's provincial championship and continuing to the national competition in London.

Success doesn't come easily however. The group spent months studying a variety of subject areas including history, geography, math, art, science, outerspace and meteorology, to name only a few.

For the past two months the work intensified. The group met every lunch hour, and two hours twice a week after school, studying binders full of information and questions from previous

To make the information overload a little more manageable, each team member was assigned certain areas, said team coach and English teacher Valerie Gibson. Each student was responsible for knowing all the countries, capitals, and major rivers of a continent. The other subjects were divided among team members according, more or less, to each student's interests and studies.



"We try to keep it as complementary (to their studies) as possible," she said.

"A lot of our information comes from our school work. It's a symbiotic relationship," said McCargar, the team's captain and expert in physics, math, astronomy, sports, and country and western music. McCargar was aided by the team's alternate Mayhew, who studies all areas, filling in if the others are unable to play.

OUTSTANDING

This drive and dedication is what has made the team outstanding, explained Gibson.

"They're wonderful kids to work with. I don't have to nag them, they want to do it," she said.

Despite the number of hours and work involved, team members insisted they have fun.

"It's hard to explain. The practises are enjoyable. It's not just a practice session where we're robots answering questions," said McCargar. "We have conversations throughout and amusing incidents."

FACTS

Combing through countless books, the group had picked up a number of little-known interesting facts. During competitions

where anything and everything was asked, knowing former Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald is buried with his mistress instead of his wife, or Napoleon died from a hormone disorder that gave him female traits, was usually helpful.

Winning also depended on beating the other team to the answer. With 160 questions per 20 to 30 minute game, there isn't much time to pause for thought. Team members had to be quick on the draw.

The Winchester Press Wed., May 29, 1991

Budding Dundas scientist win top awards at Counties fair

- A number of area students took home awards recently, from the annual United Counties Science Fair. Winners included:

- Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists trophy - for best in Applied Sciences - Kevin McCargar, North Dundas District High School.

- Chemical Institute of Canada award for best project dealing with a chemical topic or process - Kevin McCargar, North Dundas District High School.

- RCAFA Wing 424 Gold Research awards (for 90 per cent or over) - Kevin McCargar, North Dundas District High School.



Kevin McCargar. McCargar won a gold medal, the OACETT award and the Chemical Institute of Canada Award for his project on the production of hydrogen gas.

Winchester Press Wed., April 24, 1991

Quiz team almost climbs to the top

But the NDDHS students had to settle for being the second-best team in Canada. A team from British Columbia won the championship, held last month at the University of Western Ontario in London.

Although the NDDHS students are disappointed, they're still a bit surprised at having reached the finals.

Team captain Kevin McCargar said the five students are "worn out and ragged." The team won 40 of the 43 games they played, including regional and provincial championships.

McCargar said the final game could have gone either way.

"At that point, the teams are so evenly matched that it's basically luck."

After the final match, the team celebrated with pizza and an evening at the Second City comedy club. Now they're back to the business of final exams and signing each other's yearbooks.

Despite their achievements, the students didn't receive any special treatment from their NDDHS peers.

"There really isn't any prestige associated with being on Reach for the Top," said team member Heather Giles.

That sentiment was echoed by at least one student in the school halls who commented, "You bums, why didn't you win it all?"

"They're not all that hostile," said Giles, laughing.



McCargar said he'll miss the intensive practice sessions, but won't miss questions about art and literature. He and Wallbridge preferred math, physics and chemistry problems.

The North Dundas District High School Reach for the Top team were Ontario champions this year, ending up a game away from the Canadian championship. They accept a plaque from MPP Noble Villeneuve commemorating their achievements. Back row are Villeneuve, Rob Wallbridge, and Kevin McCargar. Front row are Natasha Harwood, Nadine Mayhew, Heather Giles and Val Gibson.

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