

OCT 10

Vol 16

Issue 9

Wethersfield



👤 Tom Gworek shares memories of growing up during World War II. See story, page 32.

🎓 WHS students form a technology company. See story, page 3. Photo by Wayne Sassano



Politics

14

State legislature candidates speak
Senate and house races are profiled.

Government

22

Getting to know Councilman Mike Hurley

Soap Box	4	Kids LIFE	35
Letters	4	Spotlight	50
Roundup	8	Calendar	56
People Notes	20	Photo Roundup	60



The All New 2011
Audi Q5 2.0 Premium
\$499. per month.
more than 30
to choose from!

All new with turbocharged 2.0L four cylinder engine, panoramic sunroof, heated seats, and Bluetooth®. Order yours at Hoffman Audi today.

Audi Truth in Engineering



Hoffman Audi

700 Connecticut Blvd., E. Hartford, and Broad St., New London



Find us on:
facebook

860.289.7721 hoffmanaudi.com

42 mo. closed end lease w/ purchase option. Order yours today. \$3500 due at signing, plus tax, reg., doc. and bank fees. 10k mi. per year. Exp. 10/31/10.

Wethersfield

In Focus

W.H.S. young inventors start their own business

They are also raising money by fixing computers

by Joyce Rossignol

Believing in teenagers in general and in themselves in particular, a group of students have created their own independent technology company: InvenTech Enterprises, LLC.

Though their idea grew out their involvement with the JETS (Junior Engineering Technical Society) organized by physics teacher Susan Fennelly at Wethersfield High School, their new business is not a school project.

Team member Griffin Latulippe said, "This is not something we can do in a classroom. We are distancing ourselves from the school. This is a real life experience that we can learn from. We hope someday if it's a successful company to perhaps pay off our college loans with it and become a successful enterprise. We have an idea; we just have to work hard to make that idea a reality."

Group spokesperson Andy Braren said their idea is also to offer products that will make life a little easier for people with disabilities such as their wheelchair accessory called EATS (Easy Access Transport System) that was a winner in the national JETS competition. "I'd sort of like to see the EATS on a hundred wheelchairs. If EATS puts a smile on someone's face our mission is almost accomplished."

Their other product-to-be is Walken which helps people with walkers climb stairs.

Andy said, "We want to improve people's lives, whether they are in wheelchairs or use walkers or have trouble going upstairs or any other idea we come up with. InvenTech represents to me a bunch of teens changing the world and proving that teenagers can change the world. We don't have to say I'll do that when I grow up; I'm not really good enough yet. Teenagers are good enough and they can change things now. We are breaking the stereotype."

Their mission

This is their stated mission: "We formed this company to support new and creative ideas, embolden youth to create change, and above all, make people smile. We strive to create new devices that make people's lives better. Simple as that. And by doing so, we hope to prove that young people don't have to wait until they "grow up" before they can change the world. Youth run, youth led, we are InvenTech, and we're creating a better tomorrow, today."

Andy said that while this is an independent enterprise, it did start in school, when the Wethersfield High School's JETS team developed EATS that would make daily life a little more independent for anyone in a wheelchair to access their backpacks. Wethersfield's team was one of only five finalists out of 250 nationally to go to Washington, D.C.

On their flight home the eight-member team decided to continue the development of EATS and, Andy wrote in his history of the events, after the story about their achievement was publicized they began getting emails from people interested in purchasing the EATS and "we began to feel like our idea could really change people's lives." They then applied for and were awarded a \$1,000 grant from Youth Venture for the further development.

Following the success of EATS, JETS members worked together to create a new product for the next national competition. They came up with the Walken which is a walker with adjustable legs that enables users to climb up and down stairs easily and safely. Once again, the team flew to Washington and competed in the national finals, coming out with a "Best CAD Design" (computer aided design) award and a national finalist award.

After that the Walken and EATS teams believed they could do something more. They didn't want their ideas to fade away. It was suggested that the two teams come together to develop their prototypes and it was then that the idea of forming their own company was first mentioned.

This summer InvenTech Enterprises was formed.

The group worked with Geoffrey G Dellenbaugh, PhD, JD from the University of Connecticut School of Law's Intellectual Property and Entrepreneurship Law Clinic to form their own limited liability company (LLC). And, Andy writes, soon they had the paperwork all ready, filed their request for an LLC license with the state, and InvenTech was established.

They decided to name their company "InvenTech Enterprises." InvenTech signifies their commitment to developing and creating new technologies and Enterprises literally means to venture forth and carry out. They also have a website with photos, videos, and information about the EATS, Walken, and the company at www.inventechenterprises.com.

Right now they have been going through the learning process of devising an operating agreement, applying for the LLC and to raise money, in short becoming a business.

Long-range Andy said they are hoping "to make some good prototypes to show to a manufacturing partner and ship them all over the country. We need a final design."

They envision the Walken as the first with the potential to be on the market.

They said they will also welcome new members from future JETS teams if they are interested in continuing to develop their ideas after the national competition. InvenTech would stand ready to provide whatever resources they can.



InvenTechies

To raise money now, they have created a computer service called InvenTechies which is not directly affiliated with InvenTech Enterprises despite the similar name and is composed of the same people. The money raised will primarily be used for supporting the JETS teams in the high school and the development of InvenTech itself.

They came up with the computer service plan Griffin said because "A lot of us are really good with technology and computers. Growing up with computers we know how to use them. So we thought there's got to be a lot of people out there who want and need an affordable solution to figure out how to use their computers effectively and how to do certain things. That's stuff we know how to do. We can go out to people's houses and help them with their computer and take the funds we raise and invest most of it in capital for our company and we also decided using some of it for future JETS programs." In the past parents paid some of the expenses out of their own pockets.

They decided to charge \$30 an hour flat rate for whatever the customer needs to get done.

Andy said, "When the customer calls us we will talk to them to make sure we know exactly what the problem is. Then we estimate how much time it might take before we are actually going to the location and start charging. We won't take your computer and hold it for a few days and try to fix it. We will fix it at your house."

Matt Thomas said they are already open for business, putting up flyers and information on their web site www.inventechies.com. Email inventechies@gmail.com or call 860-940-0027. That number will ring in to one of their phones. They will be available after school. They will figure out who will be doing the service and make an appointment.

InvenTech members

Here's a list of InvenTech members: Andy Braren, Tom Catricala, Jeffrey Epp, Ben Grant, Griffin Latulippe, Alex Mutchler, Purven Parikh, Charles Persaud, Matt Thomas and Matt Wilson.

They wish to mention their mentors particularly Mrs. Fennelly and Mr. Wismuller who helped them greatly. Mrs. Fennelly (mentor and JETS team organizer) returned the compliment. "I am very impressed by these students. I feel like a proud mother;" John Wismuller (engineer); Jim Grise (engineer); Marty Grant (engineer); Bill Smyers (engineer & inventor); Ken Trifiro (engineer) and, the students add: "All of our parents." **WL**