

Chatham High School
Preliminary Battle of the Belts Competition
2011 Final Report
Submitted by Tracy Kelly, SADD CO-Advisor

Thank you for allowing our SADD Chapter to once again, host a preliminary Battle of the Belts Competition. It is always such an exciting event for our students and school community. We have been hosting this event for the last six years and every year is more exciting than the last.

This year, the event was held on Thursday, April 14th. Eleven teams of four participated in the competition, including two faculty teams. Students always enjoy seeing our faculty members compete against one another and it also shows the faculty's support. Great prizes including 4 free prom tickets (value of \$65 each), gift cards from the Dairy Queen, Pizza Den and Stewart's, and movie passes to the Crandall Theater were purchased with the grant money and given away. Valerie Persons, the school nurse and Sandy Fischer, a science teacher both donated the use of their vans for the afternoon. The team with the fastest time was the "BA Bucklers" (Grace Rugen, Katherine Young, Annika Tucksmith and Cheyenne Shufelt) with a time of 33.63. This same group participated last year and actually improved their time from the third fastest time of 36.97. They went on to compete at the World Championship Battle of the Belts Competition on May 1st.

Local law enforcement officials were invited to attend and help officiate. Captain David Bartlett and two other Deputies from the Columbia County Sheriff's Department came to assist and show their support. Ironically, the Deputy who usually comes was unable to attend because he was hit by a drunk driver while on duty a few weeks prior to the event.

We invited local newspapers to cover the story as well as posted an article about it on the Chatham High School website. I have attached pictures and an Article from the Chatham Courier.

Each year our SADD Chapter looks forward to hosting this event. It's a great way to encourage students to buckle up and make good decisions, which is our mission.

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New winners, more awareness at 6th annual preliminary Battle of the Belts

By Paul Crossman

CHATHAM — Nearly all the students and faculty from Chatham High School crowded around two vans in the parking lot Thursday for the 6th annual preliminary Battle of the Belts challenge. According to event coordinator Tracy Kelly, the challenge is designed to raise awareness of driving safety and to help students remember to always buckle up.

"It's a fun way of highlighting the importance of buckling your seat belts," said Kelly.

High school Principal John Thorsen whole-heartedly agreed.

"I don't think there can be too many reminders about safe driving and being smart behind the wheel," he said. "It's a great way to kick off spring."

Eleven four-person teams — including two composed of staff members — competed

in the competition, which involved sprinting to the vans, buckling the seat belts and raising their hands when finished. Once everyone on the team had raised their hands and were inspected by an officer from the Columbia County Sheriff's Office, they performed a Chinese fire drill, continuing the action until all four members of the team had been buckled and inspected in all four seats.

Officials this year were retired Chatham Police Chief Kevin Boehme and Deputy Sheriff Wendy Moon.

"We think it's really important to have a really good working relationship with the school and SADD," said Captain Dave Bartlett of the Sheriff's Office. "We work very closely with the Chatham SADD chapter and hopefully this will help educate students and eliminate the tragedies that happen when people drink and drive."

See Belts on page 3



One of the teams in the preliminary Battle of the Belts challenge compete April 14, while a deputy sheriff judges and Chatham High School students and faculty look on. Paul Crossman/Chatham Courier

...Belts Continued from front page

Prizes provided by the school and several local merchants — including movie passes to the Crandell Theatre, free prom tickets and gift certificates to Dairy Queen, Pizza Den and Stewart's — were given to the teams with the fastest times, best team shirts and best team name.

This year's team with the fastest time was the BA Bucklers, clocking in at 33.63. They will now move on to compete against other school districts in the "World Championship Battle of the Belts" at Sean's Run Sunday, May 1.

Last year's champions, Buckle Up Bettys, came in second with a time of 35.38 and the Backseat Bucklers

came in third with a time of 38.78.

The BA Bucklers included Grace Rugen, Katherine Young, Annika Tucksmith and Cheyenne Shufelt. The Buckle Up Bettys were Melyssa Sweet, Katelynn Strobel, Cailey Nieto and Christine Ewasick and the Backseat Bucklers team consisted of Marissa Meyers, Victoria Bemiss, Cady Sardo and Maddy Peirce.

"We started doing it just for fun, but there really is an underlying message," said Nieto. "Buck your seat belt ... it takes 20 seconds."

Team "The Pain Train" — winners for Best Team Shirt — agreed, saying that it was a fun way to get students inter-

ested, and helped get a serious point across.

Best Team Name went to "We are SADD Too," a pun on the fact that they were the second SADD team to sign up this year.

Kelly and Amanda Carroll, as well as the Chatham chapter of Students Against Drunk Driving, organized the event, which was made possible by the 10th Annual Sean Patrick French Memorial Run and Columbia County STOP DWI Program.

"It's just a great way to raise awareness about not drinking and driving during prom season and to highlight the importance of buckling up," said SADD President Ryan Behrens.