



NEWS PHOTO BY MEL SCHIELTZ

Students at George Washington High School have developed a computer program to organize volunteer car pools. What's more, they're

offering it to area businesses. Mark Frank, 17, left, who wrote the program, explains the process to fellow students Sue Shafner, Mark Katz,

Sandy Parker and Leigh Kennison, paired as car pool members in a selected test class. Students hope to implement program after Thanksgiving.

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GW students organize computerized car pool

By TOM REES
News Staff

George Washington High School students, seeking ways to cope with the energy crisis, have created a computer program to help organize car pools.

A sample program has been worked out for 35 students in an algebra class. The paperwork necessary to offer the program to the school's 2,700 students should be completed next week. The program will be offered to Denver high school principals Friday.

And the G.W. students feel confident enough to offer the program to Denver residents right now.

It started last month in an American Contemporary Issues class taught by William Stuber.

"We were looking at the year 2000 and the alternatives we might have if we run out of energy," Stuber explained.

FORCED TO LIMIT

He said the conversation eventually centered on what might happen if people were forced to limit the use of their cars. "We decided to see if it were feasible to develop car pools."

The question was bucked to Dr. Irwin Hoffman's computer mathematics class.

There, the computer problem was given to 17-year-old Mark Frank, son of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Frank, 6980 E. Exposition Ave.

"I was real excited about it. The problem was very applicable to the computer," said Frank, a senior who has been working with computers for four years.

Simply speaking, the program is designed to identify and pair students who live close to each other so they can arrange car pools to and from school. The concept can readily be applied to any business or industry, according to Hoffman.

PLOTS PROXIMITY

Frank divided the city map into grids two-tenths of a mile square, or about two square blocks. Students' addresses are assigned a point on the map. This information is then fed into the computer which plots the proximity of each student's home. A minimum of four potential car pool members are identified.

For example, in a sample car pool for Leigh Kennison of 915 S. Jersey St., two members live only about a block away—Mark Katz of 763 S. Ivy St., and Sandy Parker of 813 S. Ivy St. The fourth member, Sue Shafner of 719 S. Hudson St., lives a little more than two blocks away. All are students in George Washington's Algebra III class, the group chosen to test the computer program.

The circle for potential car pool members can be widened in increments of one-tenth of a mile.

Each potential car pool member receives a computer print-out listing the names, addresses and phone numbers or other potential members. They're also told how far away from each other they live.

Frank isn't sure what kind of response the car pool program will receive at GW. Many students, he noted, already use car pools. But they often drive out of their way to pick up friends.

"If they're enthusiastic" and want to use the scientific car pool, "I think it'll work. It's a very good use of the computer. I hope it pulls us through" any gas rationing, Frank said.

Hoffman thinks it will take actual gas rationing before the program is widely accepted.

"But, when they find they only have so much gas for going skiing or out on dates, I think they'll go for car pools," the teacher said.

Hoffman said the students are willing to show representatives of businesses how to work out a car pool list, and the Denver Public Schools will process the program in its computer at the Denver Opportunity School.

Or the students will provide the basic program to any firm that has its own computer.

Mark Frank, who developed the program, doesn't plan to use it. He lives a block and a half from school and he's a bicycle enthusiast. "That's my answer to the whole mess," he said.