



July 10, 2008

Talk of our town: Susan Guyett

Ex-driver gets on her soap box

Former race car driver **Lyn St. James** stopped by Camp GEMS on Wednesday to check on the progress campers were making on the soap box derby cars they were building.

The campers, girls 11 to 14, are attending the camp because of their interest in math and science. Their two-week sessions at Marian College are filled with fun projects, experiments and hands-on learning. St. James donated two car kits to the camp.

Camp GEMS (Girls Empowered in Math and Science) came about as a collaborative effort of Girls Inc. of Indianapolis and the college's Life Science Education Center. Girls Inc. encourages young girls to be strong, smart and bold.

St. James remembers thinking she'd have no need to use math or science outside the classroom -- until she started racing. She quickly realized she'd never be successful on the track if she didn't know everything about her car.

Since she stopped racing, St. James has worked with young women who want to be successful race car drivers. She didn't think the campers are necessarily interested in motor sports but said that what they learned while building the car would help them no matter what they did in life.

If nothing else, they would know "this is not just for guys," she said.

Asia Roundtree, 11, said she did like racing. **Hannah Kassab**, 14, is interested in mechanics.

The payoff for the soap box derby project will come from 9 to 11 a.m. July 18, when the campers make their way down Wilbur Shaw Hill at 30th Street and Cold Spring Road. The public is welcome to stop by to watch and ask the girls about building the cars.