



LEARNING HOW TO RUN A ROBOT Jessica Soderlund used a control box to make the machine pick up colored balls. — Dictator photo

'Tech nerds' build robot for contest

By WHITNEY BEINKE
Seven Decatur Community High School students, named the "Tech Nerds," spent six weeks building a robot for a competition sponsored by BEST Robotics.

BEST is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization whose mission is to inspire students to pursue careers in engineering, science, and technology through participation in a sports-like, science and engineering-based robotics competition. The competition was held in Wichita two weeks ago.

The Oberlin students named their robot Bob, which was made of PVC pipe, aluminum, plywood, Velcro, wire and string. The students showed off all their hard work at a special demonstration last week during home room.

The students who built the robot were Corey Cook, Jeremy Tally, David Morris, David Barth, Jared Marcuson, Lacey Ream, and Heather Glodt.

The sponsors and advisers were Jess Randel, Rob McFee, Mark Bricker, and Nathan Copeland.

Technical coordinator Jess Randel had presented the idea to the Oberlin students and faculty.

The Oberlin students didn't place at the competition, but they received a teamwork award.

"Because our robot was always breaking down, we had to work together a lot to fix it," said senior David Barth. "That's probably why we won the teamwork award."

The robot competition began in 1992 with 14 competing schools and 221 students. Today BEST has over 700 middle and high schools and over 8,000 students participating each fall.

The Oberlin team participated in Kick Off Day, which brought together the teams signed up to compete and unveiled the playing field, game theme, and rules for the year. Up until this day, the playing field and challenge had been kept secret

from the teams. Teams were introduced to the game, the rules were discussed, and the kits were distributed.

For the competition, each team designed and built a radio-controlled machine to accomplish defined tasks in a game-type format. Six weeks before the competition, the teams gathered for Kick Off Day in early September in Wichita where they received identical kits of equipment (motors, r/c unit, batteries, etc.) and raw materials from which to build their machines, and a detailed set of game rules. The machines they built could not weigh more than 24 pounds, must fit within a 24-inch cube, and must be built only from the raw materials supplied to them.

Game Day occurred six weeks after Kick Off Day, which according to the BEST website "merges the excitement of a high school basketball game with the strategy of a chess match and intellectual challenge of a science fair." The gym floor was more or less divided in half, with one half containing the playing field and the other half containing what is called "the Pit"—sort of like the pit stop in a NASCAR race. Each team was provided a table on which to work on their machine between matches.

The robotics game is based upon an annual theme with four teams competing at once in a series of three-minute, round-robin matches. For this year's game, the robot was built to pick up plastic balls and move them to scoring areas. Each team scored one point for each ball they put into the bin behind them, and two points for each ball they could put into a "shared bin." Because it was a shared bin, the other team got the two points as well.

"The whole six weeks was a lot of fun," said Jared Marcuson. "I really enjoyed the competition in Wichita, and I will definitely want to be a part of the team again."

Annual musical set for weekend

By SHAREE DEMPEWOLF

The "Godspell" cast will perform their musical on Nov. 19 and 20. The musical will start at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$4 for students and senior citizens.

On Nov. 20, the vocal department welcomes everyone to come enjoy

"dinner and a show." Reservations needed to be in to Susan Nelson by Nov. 15. The cost of dinner and a show is \$10. They will be serving an appetizer bar, lasagna, garlic bread, and a dessert bar.

The money raised will be used for the vocal trip in the spring.

Musicians try out for honors

By KELSEY GALLENLINE

Many students from Decatur Community High School tried out and made the Kansas Music Educators Association Honor Choir and Honor Band.

On Dec. 11, the band and choir will perform in Hays. Oberlin students who made the district band include Karyn Jordan, second chair clarinet; Jessica Bremer, fifth chair clarinet; Aaron Helm, 10th chair clarinet; Marci Metcalf, fifth chair flute; and Rebecca Helm, ninth chair flute.

The band members had to send in a tape to try out. The vocal members had to audition live in Hays, and had to sing portions of three different songs.

Those who made the choir are Kenzie Fisher, Karli Fredrickson, Jenny Hirsch, Anne Wasson, Destry Jackson, Jeremy Tally, David Morris, Kurt Olson, Jenny Ploussard, Gabe Moore, Danica May, Anthony Marshall, Kellen Doeden, Nolan May, and Riley Cochran. Jessica Bremer is an alternate.

Their music teachers are Susan Nelson and Deanne Spanier.

Red ribbons fight drugs

By SHAREE DEMPEWOLF

Oct. 25-29 was Red Ribbon Week, set aside to inform people to steer clear of drug and alcohol use. It is also to help teach children and young adults about the harmful affects of drugs and alcohol.

David Morris, Tricia Dorshorst, Jeremy Tally, Breck Simonsson, Jonathon Richards, Colt Diederich, Karli Fredrickson, Jennifer Hirsch, Kellen Doeden, Heather Williams, Kelly Olson and Anthony Marshall went to the grade school to talk to the students about drugs and alcohol.

They also gave out Halloween treat bags, tattoos, and red ribbons.

At the high school, TACT aired an announcement during homeroom each day about drugs and alcohol. They also handed out red ribbons to students and staff members.

Menus

November 22-26 OBERLIN

Monday — Breakfast: cereal, muffin, tropical fruit. Lunch: potato bar, turkey fritter. **Tuesday** — Breakfast: sausage, egg and cheese biscuit. Lunch: pizza. **Wednesday - Friday** — Thanksgiving vacation.

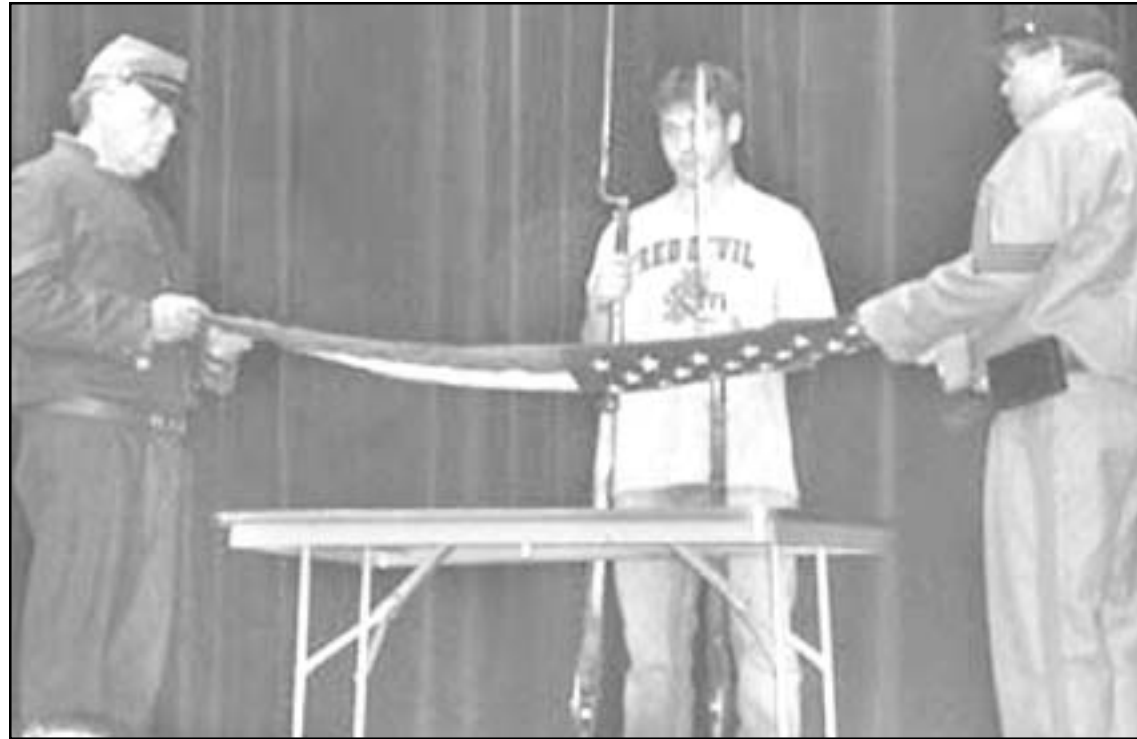
PRAIRIE HEIGHTS

Breakfast served daily: toast, cereal, juice. Lunches: **Monday** — hamburgers, Doritos, baked beans, applesauce. **Tuesday** — ham, au gratin potatoes, corn, fruit cocktail. **Wednesday - Friday** — Thanksgiving vacation.

Voice of Decatur Community High School

Decatur Dictator

By the DCHS Dictator Staff



FOLDING A FLAG that had flown over Fort McHenry, Warren Bainter and John Bremer helped with a tribute to veterans on Veteran's Day. National Honor Society member Denton Bailey held their guns. The flag was later presented to the school. — Dictator photo

High School honors veterans

By M.J. DEMPEWOLF

Principal Charles Haag and members of the National Honor Society organized a Veteran's Day Program for Nov. 11 during homeroom, to honor our veterans. Area veterans who helped with the program were John Bremer, Warren Bainter, Elmer Kathka, Lawrence Wenger, Bill Woods, and Jack O'Toole.

National Honor Society Vice President Andy Anderson welcomed the student body and staff and led them in the "Pledge of Allegiance." He also explained what each fold of the flag means. This was taken from an email that National Honor Society adviser Candy Dejmal had received from Col. Delbert Townsend, a Decatur Community High School alumni.

Mr. Bremer and Mr. Bainter folded a flag that had flown over Fort McHenry while Andy read the message. The men then presented the flag to Andy for the school.

Anthony Marshall explained the purpose of Veteran's Day. He read, "Veteran's Day is the day set aside to thank and honor all those who served honorably in the military — wartime or peacetime. In fact, Veteran's Day is largely intended to thank living veterans for their service, to acknowledge that their contributions to our national security are appreciated, and to underscore the fact that all those who served — not only those who died — have sacrificed and done their duty."

Society member Denton Bailey read the official declaration of

Veteran's Day by President George W. Bush, and Jennifer Hirsch told the student body the number of veterans from each war that have died. Jamie Elwood explained the history of Veteran's Day, and Jason Thomas read a passage from President Eisenhower. Karyn Jordan explained the flag's nickname, "Old Glory."

Anthony Marshall then played "Taps" while Bronson Scott explained the history of "Taps."

Susan Nelson also led the student body in the singing of "God Bless America."

"Taking 20 minutes out of the day to honor our veterans is the least we can do," said Brenda Breth. "It was a nice program, and the students all did a super job."

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So, if you get pulled over for a traffic violation and are not wearing your seat belt, you aren't going to get just one ticket — you're going to get two! I know you may not like it, but enforcing the law is my job. And I'd rather see you angry than dead.

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