



AT THE GATEWAY last Tuesday, Annamarie Larue (left) showed members of the Oberlin Rotary Club how the students' robot worked. Another student, Jeremy Tally, and Jason Ketterl, vocational agriculture teacher, (above) watched.
— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

Students design robot to work on telescope

By KELLEN DOEDEN
The Decatur Dictator

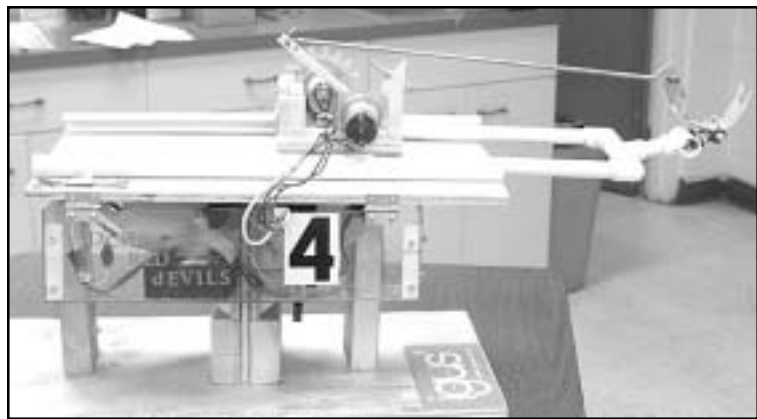
The Tech Club from Decatur Community High School took fifth place in the Kansas Boosting Engineering, Science, and Technology (BEST) robotics competition.

The competition is designed to help students who plan to go into engineering, science or technology. They have to build a remote-controlled robot that can complete the assigned task, which changes each year.

The job for this year's competition was to design a robot to repair the Hubble telescope. The playing field was designed with a model of the telescope and battery units all around it. The team with the robot that gets the job done fastest wins.

Club members across the nation are guided by professional engineers, school faculty, and others who want to help. Students at Decatur Community High School were assisted by Jess Randel, former school technology coordinator; Mark Bricker, high school science teacher; Jason Ketterl, the vocational agriculture instructor; and Rob McFee, a parent and postal worker.

The Oberlin students built, practiced with, and painted their robot in about five weeks. They named it Bob II. Team members were Jeremy Tally, senior; Corey Cook, junior; Jared Marcuson, sophomore; and Chris Larson, Jordan Tally, Haley



BOB II, a robot made by students in the Decatur Community High Tech Club, placed fifth at the Boosting Engineering, Science, and Technology competition last month in Wichita.
— Decatur Dictator photo

Barrett, Heather Ploussard, Alyssa Rippe, Sabrina Dellere, Joe Dunham and Annamarie Larue, all freshmen.

The team went to Wichita three times for a meeting and two competitions. The first competition was practice, and the Oberlin team took second.

During the real competition, the remote control on the Oberlin robot malfunctioned. The team ended up in fifth place out of about 30 teams.

Teams from all over Kansas competed, plus one from Arkansas. It was allowed in because the Arkansas BEST competition doesn't allow home-school teams, but Kansas does.

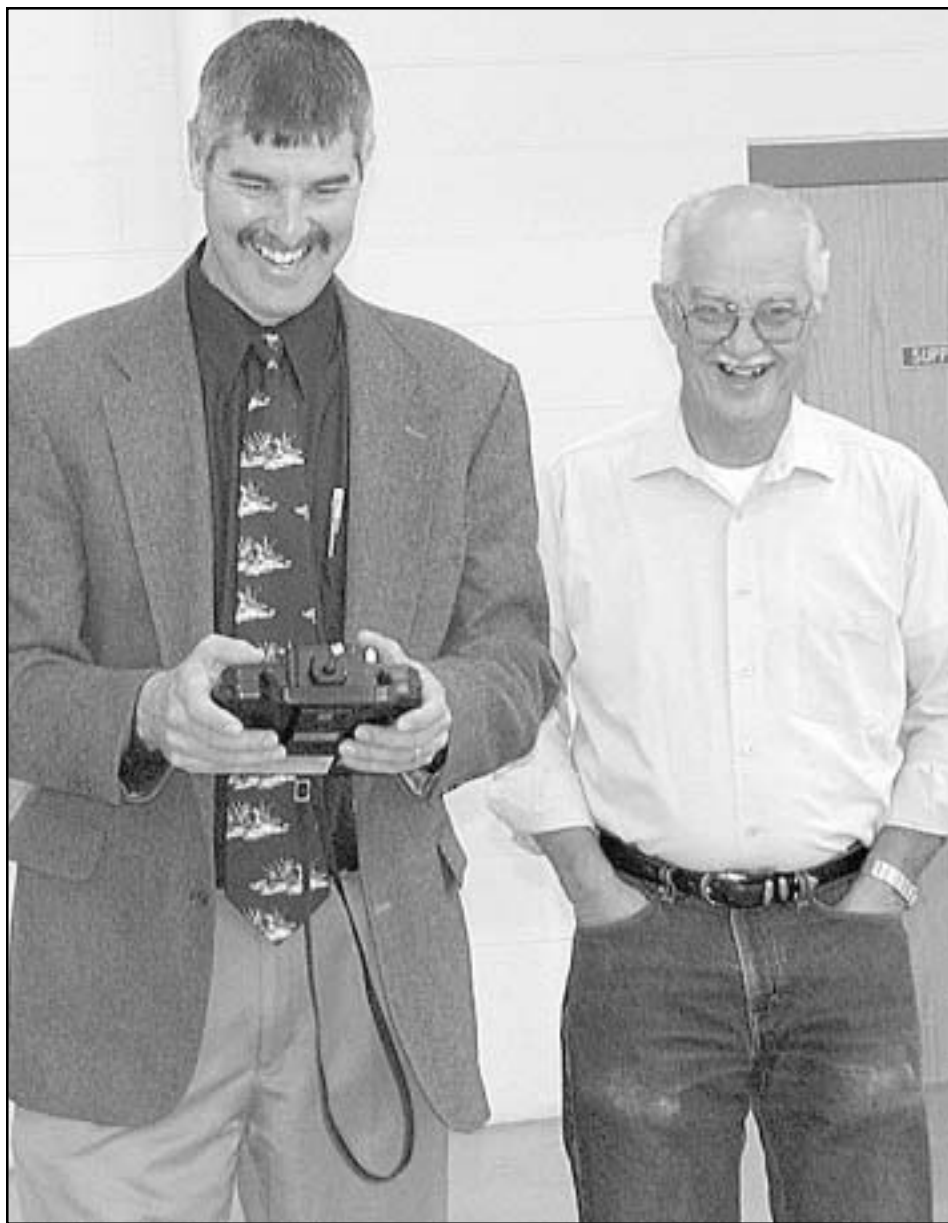
The top three teams were Wichita

Home School, Rose Hill High School and Johnson County Home School.

"This year was easier because we knew what we had to do, since we had a year under our belt," said Mr. Marcuson. "We went the simplest way rather than making everything complicated."

Students in the Dean's Circle of the College of Engineering at Wichita State University started the Kansas competition after watching the Texas competition in 1998. The first Kansas competition took place in October 1999.

"The competition was a lot of fun," said Jeremy Tally. "We worked hard, and I am proud of our accomplishment."



SUPERINTENDENT KELLY GLODT used the remote control to run the robot, while retired band teacher Neal Russell watched.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes