

It's on like

MEGATRON

Physics club to host "sumo robot" battle

HEATHER WAGNER
physics writer

Transformers just got a little more real.

The Behrend Physics club is planning a "sumo robot contest" in December, open to any interested students.

The sumo robot contest involves the creation of an autonomous robot which will battle other robots to the death. By death, they mean run the other robot off the table. Mercilessly, of course.

But don't get too carried away here. The rules are strict, and flamethrowers are expressly prohibited.

It is a contest of ingenuity and programming skill. There is merely an entry fee and a few guidelines.

Think you've got the ball bearings to throw your robot into the ring? Check the info between the feet of the leader of the Decepticons, channel some MacGyver, and prepare for the robot fight of your life.

For any more information regarding the contest, contact Heather Wagner at hlw5041@psu.edu.



SUMO ROBOT CONTEST

THE WHEN AND WHERE:

Date: Saturday Dec. 7
Time: TBD
Location: TBD

THE OBJECT:

Run everyone else's robot off the table.

THE DETAILS:

Any student can enter for an entry fee. Flamethrowers prohibited, but robotic carnage encouraged.

THE CONTACT INFO:

Heather Wagner, at hlw5041@psu.edu.

Top Science News:

ENVIRONMENT

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature has released the new Red List of Threatened Species. The union met in Gland, Switzerland to compose a list of plant and animal species that are following the way of the famous dodo.

According to the new list, there are 17,291 species that face an ever nearing demise. 21 percent of known mammals, 30 percent of known amphibians, 12 percent of known birds, 28 percent of reptiles, 37 percent of freshwater fish, 35 percent of invertebrates, 70 percent of plants are on the verge of extinction.

LIFE

A study at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel has shown why some smells take us back to our childhood. In the study, volunteers were shown an object and introduced to an odor. After half an hour, they were given another smell while still looking at the same object. A week later, the volunteers were shown the same object and asked what smell they remember. Using MRI images they saw that the volunteers associated the object with the first smell presented. Their team concluded that the brain gives precedence to smells when first introduced to an object.

ENVIRONMENT

In 1990, a NASA spacecraft flew by Earth with an acceleration that no one could explain. Then in 2005 a European spacecraft exhibited the same behavior. Scientists still have no answers as to why this acceleration occurs, postulating that there are new exotic physics to be learned. On November 13, the European spacecraft will fly past Earth again. Scientists will be observing the craft to spot the anomaly again, and discover its origins.

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Why be a math major

Mathematics Reporter Nichole M. Buczynski looks into the reality behind why students major in mathematics at Penn State Behrend

Myths still fly in regards to one of the oldest studies at a university: mathematics. Many assume that there are no jobs for math majors. Many people see it as an extremely difficult major. Some people feel that math provides little opportunity for research.

With all of these assumptions, it can sometimes be hard to sift through the myths to find the true facts about being a math major. Ask any of Penn State Behrend's mathematics majors, though, and they will set you straight on their studies.

Jose Sosa, a sophomore math major, provided a couple of details on what he feels makes a math major. Sosa is from Queens, New York and applied to Penn State Behrend with

the intent of transferring the University Park. Sosa has changed his mind, due to the fact that Behrend offers a lot of opportunities for research, the faculty is nice, and class sizes are small.

Sosa explained that his favorite thing about math is that it is concrete and that it builds upon itself.

"Being a math major means that I can solve problems," he said. "I believe that when employers look to hire someone, they want problem solvers, people who

can get the job done."

Daniel Galinsky Jr., a junior also majoring in mathematics, agrees that a math major will provide many opportunities for the future.

"There is a kind of prestige about it. I feel that I am accomplishing something significant in the grand scheme of things."

Daniel Galinsky Jr.

Junior - Mathematics major

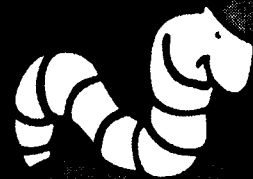
"With a math degree, I believe that I will be in a great position to get many different jobs," Galinsky said.

"It is not as focused as an engineering degree, which gives me many more opportunities. Also, it is not so broad as to not give me what I need."

"I am very proud of being a math major...There is a kind of prestige about it. I feel that I am accomplishing something significant in the grand scheme of things."

Galinsky's plans for the future include possibly doing research - maybe for the government - and then going on for a master's degree in mathematics.

Research opportunities for mathematics majors are actually quite numerous. There is always a professor looking for someone to help with research. In addition, the job outlook for mathematicians is actually quite large. Like Sosa plans to, many end up working for the government - the largest employer of mathematics is the National Security Agency.



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