

Childhood favorite turns into league at Behrend

ALEXA WOODS
engineering writer

LEGO blocks are the toys that many people know and love from childhood. But how many are aware that these blocks are used in engineering as well?

On Nov. 13, area middle school students came to Penn State Behrend to engage their problem-solving skills with LEGO blocks. The FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) LEGO League is one of several types of competitions held by FIRST.

FIRST is an organization that promotes science, technology, engineering and math fields among students.

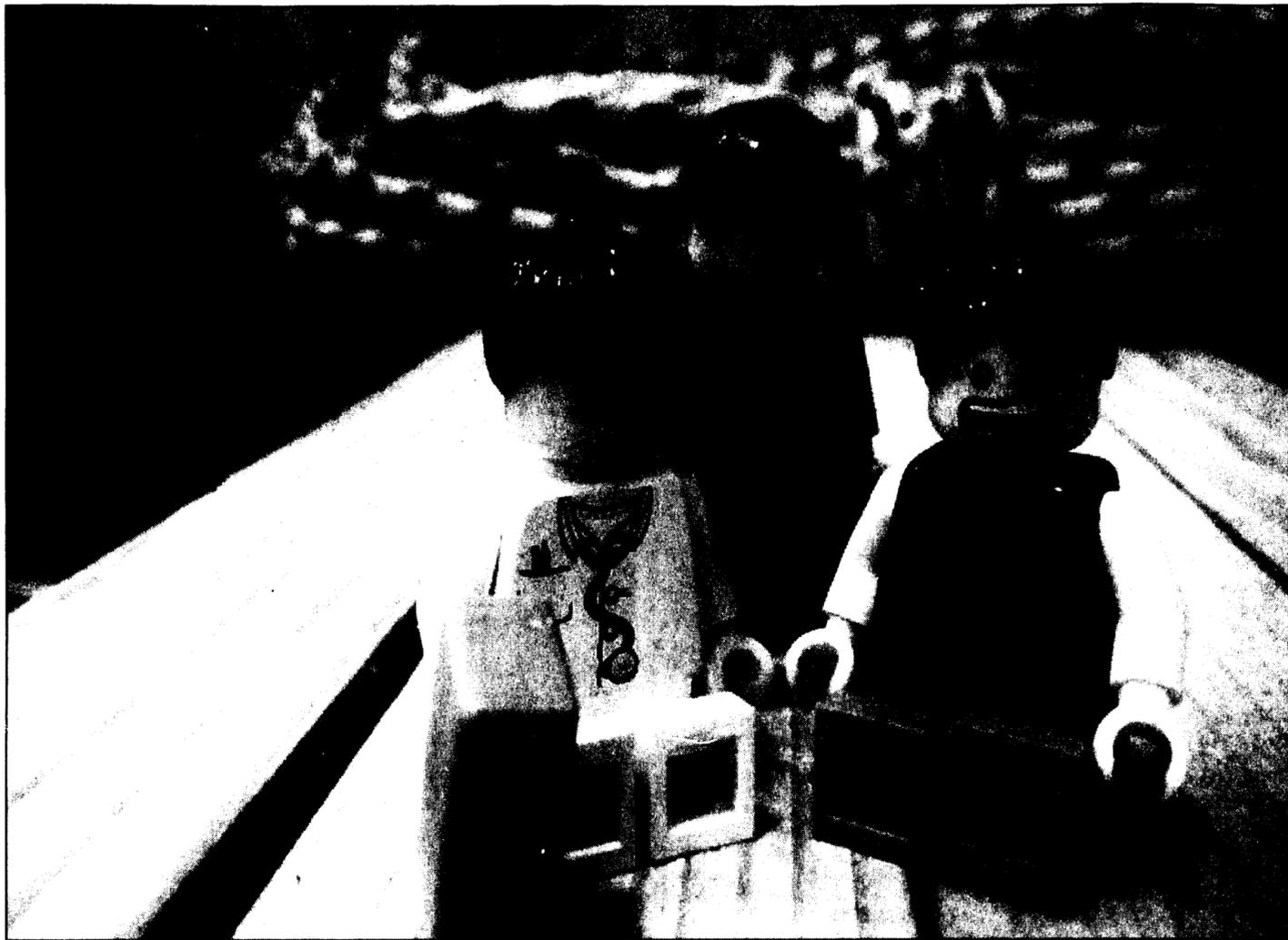
The FIRST LEGO league (FLL) competition held at Behrend involves students creating and programming robots using LEGO blocks.

A theme is selected for the competitions each year.

"This year's theme is Body Forward," said Melanie Ford, the head of the Engineering Outreach Center, who organized the event this year. "It combines engineering with medical themes."

The robots are placed on a table which has a course set up on it. The robots move about the course, completing various tasks. 44 teams from the area came to participate at Behrend.

There are several advantages to students that participate in the FLL. According to the official website of FIRST, usfirst.org, students that participate in FIRST programs are three times more likely to major in engineering in college, ten times more likely to get an internship or apprenticeship their freshman year, and more than twice as likely to volunteer in their communities, compared to students with similar academic backgrounds that did not participate in FIRST.



<http://picasaweb.google.com>

Penn State Behrend played host to the FIRST LEGO League, a robotics competition that had middle school students build competing bots of Legos to complete a series of

tasks. Behrend students volunteered for this day as well.

There are advantages to hosting this competition at Behrend as well. Students that may potentially pursue a STEM career in the future get a first look at the Behrend campus. Behrend students

volunteered for this day as well.

"We give students an opportunity to give back to the community," said Ford.

"One of our students had no idea how big the competi-

tion is and had just as much fun as the middle school students did."

After all, having fun is the main point of the competition.

"One student came in 38th

place," said Ford, "but told me he had the time of his life."

Behrend will be hosting the FIRST Tech Competition in February. If interested contact Ford at mrf11@psu.edu.

PSB hosts Women in Engineering Day

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Recently, the Behrend K-12 Outreach program held its annual Women in Engineering Day here on campus. This program provides a great opportunity for young women from surrounding high schools to have a closer look at the engineering programs Behrend has to offer.

Melanie Ford, the head of the engineering outreach center, worked with other faculty members and local corporations, such as LORD Corporation and General Electric, to put on this event.

Because there are so few women in engineering, Ford emphasizes the importance of encouraging younger female students to enroll within an engineering program.

"We want to encourage them [women] to pursue

careers in engineering and many of them don't know what engineering consists of and how it helps people," said Ford.

WIE day consists of several workshops that the high school students attend. These workshops provided a hands-on experience within the different areas of engineering.

One workshop was called "Flower Power," which was led by General Electric, and the girls were able to create a circuit using soldering irons.

Santa, a 16-year-old from Strong Vincent, claimed this workshop was her favorite.

"It's really fun! It really helps if you don't know what you want to do for a career."

Another workshop, led by LORD Corporation, allowed the students to create cars and put them through several road tests.

This event taught the im-

portance of collaborative work, as many engineers are used to work on one particular project.

"Clean Water Anyone," a new event to the program this year, challenged students to find ways to filter water in order to provide clean drinking water. This event simulated what real engineers are attempting to do in third world countries.

There are many different fields of engineering and the K-12 Outreach program is doing their best to spread the word, especially to women.

This event enables high school females to understand engineering concepts and allows them to participate in fun, hands-on activities that involve problem solving.

Ford and the other engineering staff hope for continued success of WIE day in the future.



Photo provided by Melanie Ford

Women interested in engineering design system to lift a tea bag powered only by air.

Tau Beta Nu shoots for national chapter

CHRIS HENLEY
engineering writer

Tau Beta Nu is Penn State Behrend's engineering honor society. It is exclusive to Behrend, making our campus and engineering programs here all the more unique.

Although the club is a provisional society of Tau Beta Pi, the national engineering honor society, in two more years, Tau Beta Pi will be able to petition for a chapter in the national society.

It is still a relatively new organization, as it was only established two years ago in 2008, but the time will come soon for them to petition.

Once they do petition, and

when they become an official chapter among Tau Beta Pi, Behrend's members will be able to attend the national convention.

That's not all though. Every member ever in Behrend's engineering honor society will then become members of the national engineering honor society.

To run such an organization, there must be head positions amongst the members.

To determine the officials of the society, elections are held in the spring semester of each year.

At these elections, members vote for fellow affiliates to take up positions in the organizations office.

"Tau Beta Nu also offers tutoring to students for junior and senior level engineering courses"

-STEEL FLYNN
PRESIDENT ENGINEERING
HONORS SOCIETY

Currently, the president of the society is Steel Flynn, a senior mechanical engineering major and the vice president is Jaclyn Marsh.

Also, Dr. Kathleen Muhonen acts as the society's advisor.

She is an electrical and computer engineering professor here at Behrend.

Flynn became a member, when he was inducted in the fall of 2009.

He was elected to his current position as organization's president in the spring of 2010.

"Currently, there are a group of inductees working on community service projects to fulfill their volunteer requirement for the society," Flynn said

Tau Beta Nu also offers tutoring to students for junior and senior level engineering

courses and several sophomore courses on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-8pm.

Signs advertising this can be found around the Burke Center.

"We occasionally plan social events to get together and meet, and we are currently looking for new ways other than tutoring to get our name out there as a society," said Flynn

So if you're engineering major, and you need a little extra help studying for your upcoming finals, look in to the tutoring Tau Beta Nu can offer you.

It could pay off big time when you sit down in a class for the last time this semester.

Jobs of the Week:
"Know yourself, know the education you can, but know God do something. Don't be a hero."

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