

ROBO-COMPETITORS



Submitted photo

(L-R) Front row: Theresa Barden, Alex Lansberry, Alyssa Conlan, James Bennett, Connor McKaig, and Ben Pires. Back row: Blake Fraatz and Ricky Leonard. Not pictured are Gabe Landry and Aaron Smith.

Feinstein Middle School's robotics club competes against the other top schools in RI at states

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BRISTOL— After qualifying in December, the robotics club at Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle (ASF) School competed in the State Championship Tournament of the LEGO competition on Saturday, and even though they did not take home an award, the newly constructed team went home happy.

LEGO League is a hands-on science, technology, engineering and math enrichment program that combines robotics with a research project.

Feinstein's Team Amphibious gathered at Roger Williams University to compete against 300 other students from middle

schools throughout the state.

In November and December, 70 teams showed off their designs to various judges during the qualifying tournaments, and Coventry's team was one of 40 to advance to the state championship.

The theme of this year's competition was Nature's Fury and students had to explore various natural disasters and how to assist people in staying safe and rebuilding following the storm.

Coach of the ASF team Scott Tennent explained that the competition was broken down into two parts; the robotics portion and the research portion.

He explained that the 10 student team was responsible for researching a natural disaster and a city; the students chose to

concentrate on a hurricane that took place in New Orleans.

The team then had to come up with a robot that would ensure people remained safe during the hurricane and present that to the judges.

"Their solution was to come up with an amphibious vehicle," he added. "So they built a scale model and drew up some blue prints and put together a short skit."

Tennent said the students had five minutes to present their research to the judges during the competition Saturday before they brought out their robot to compete against the other students.

"The First LEGO League is about the

See **ROBOTICS**, Page A-2

Robotics club gains experience

Continued from Page A-1

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kids,” he explained. “So it’s really hands off for the coaches so the judges want to make sure the coach is not in the room with them. The students practiced then presented how they built it, why, and the programs they used to the judges.”

With the robot they built, Team Amphibious had to program the robot to navigate through an obstacle course; a pre-built game table made entirely of LEGO elements.

The judges, who were engineers and professionals in the field, tallied up the points and gave awards in various categories such as First Place Champion’s Award, Second Place Champion’s Award,

Judge Award, First Place Robot Performance, Second Place Robot Performance, Programming, Mechanical Design, Innovation and Strategy, Presentation, Innovative Solution, Inspiration, Teamwork and Gracious Professionalism.

Although Team Amphibious did not receive any awards, Tennet said he was extremely proud of the students because they are a team of mostly new students.

Because many students graduated last year, he said the team is made up of seven sixth graders, one veteran seventh grader, one veteran eighth grader and one new eighth grader.

“They made it to states which is huge and I was proud of them,” he added. “But

it’ll be a learning experience and a new learning curve for the team.”

Two high school freshmen, who were on the ASF robotics team last year, came back to assist the new team and ended up receiving trophies.

Tennet said Linda Cowan and Victoria Kapul received the Young Coach Mentors award after Tennet and co-coach Rebecca Henderson submitted their names to the competition.

“They were really outstanding and the time they put into the club and they came back this year and helped with the club,” he explained. “It was a big commitment on their part, which we really appreciated.”