

High School Teams Compete in Engineering Olympics

It was a weighty matter to consider: Could a bridge built by high school students hold up at the Wilkes Engineering Olympics?

It turns out that the team from LaSalle College High School had the winning answer. Their bridge held 94 pounds to finish first in the bridge-building competition at the event, held April 16 in the Arnaud C. Marts Sports and Conference Center. Bridge building was one of five events at the event that drew 70 students from seven high schools to compete for \$10,000 in scholarship money. The Engineering Olympics was sponsored by Wilkes' chapter of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and the Division of Engineering and Physics.

The team winning first-place honors and a \$1,000 scholarship for each team member who chooses to attend Wilkes was Greater Nanticoke Area High School. Second-place honors went to LaSalle College High School, Philadelphia, and the third-place trophy went to E.L. Meyers High School, Wilkes-Barre.



Left: Dunmore High School students Colin Smith and Griffin Gerchman size up a problem during one of the events at the Engineering Olympics. PHOTO BY ALLISON ROTH.



The first-place team from Greater Nanticoke Area High School celebrates its victory with the Colonel. Left to right: Students Alexandra Bolinski, Arielle Domashinski, Claire Saunders, Mike Yalch, Lucas Domulevicz, team advisor Anthony Fleury, Tom Slusser, Matthew Smith, Chris Kropiewnicki, Alexander DelGuercio, Brett Schenck, and Rodney Ridley, Wilkes director of engineering. PHOTO BY KIM BOWER-SPENCE.

National Science Foundation Grant Funds Equipment for Plant Biology Research

The National Science Foundation has awarded the Wilkes biology department a \$210,880 grant to purchase six plant growth chambers. The equipment will allow Wilkes faculty and students to conduct more sophisticated plant research in sub-disciplines ranging from molecular biology to physiology and ecology. It also will improve the training of Wilkes students and enhance the appeal of plant biology.

The chambers provide full control over temperature, humidity, carbon dioxide concentration, day length and light intensity. This grant will dramatically enhance the capability of biology faculty and students to study the effects of environmental conditions on plant growth and development.

Biology faculty already engaged in plant research are the principle project investigators on the grant. They include William Terzaghi and Ken Klemow, professors of biology, and Mike Steele, biology department chair and the H. Fenner Professor of Research Biology.

Wilkes Admissions Marketing Videos Win Best in Show

Wilkes University was honored with awards for its admissions marketing materials. The local chapter of the American Advertising Federation, the Northeast Pennsylvania Ad Club, awarded "Best in Show" to the Wilkes "Be Colonel" TV spot. The same commercial won a gold award in the local, 30-second advertisement category and another gold award was garnered for the Wilkes "Be Colonel" microsite, the Web site that houses "Be Colonel" video advertisements. The University Marketing Communications Department worked with Philadelphia advertising agency 160over90 to produce the campaign. The commercials now will advance to compete in the American Advertising Federation's regional competition.

CUPRAP, the Association of Communicators in Education, also honored Wilkes at its annual CUPPIE awards. A gold award was given to the spring 2009 issue of *Wilkes* magazine; a silver award went to the Wilkes University Web site redesign, a project that included updating almost 2,500 active webpages; and a bronze award was given for a suite of three health sciences brochures featuring biological phenomena.

Wanted: Second Acts

Wilkes magazine is looking for alumni who have made career changes for a story in an upcoming issue. Whether you've switched paths due to the economy or simply because of a desire for change, we would like to hear from you. If you have a "second act" in your career that you would like to share, please contact Vicki Mayk, editor, *Wilkes* magazine, at vicki.mayk@wilkes.edu.

Speech and Debate Team Enjoys Renaissance

Wilkes University's speech and debate team has a long history in college forensics and it experienced another successful season in the 2009-2010 academic year. The team has enriched campus life for Wilkes students since 1933. After several years of inactivity, the debate team is once again enjoying success, winning more than 17 top awards this year, including a number five finish for the speech team in Pennsylvania.

The team includes two separate divisions. The speech team competes in oral interpretation and public address and the debate team competes in policy debate.

Christine Mellon, speech and debate team coach, explains that Harold Cox, University archivist, contributed an endowment to ensure that Wilkes students continue to benefit from participating in speech and debate activities.

"Without the resources provided by Dr. Cox, we wouldn't have a team today," says Mellon.

Generations of alumni contributed to the team's winning ways and current team members continue that legacy. David Cook, a sophomore English and communications major from Wilkes-Barre, and Jeffrey Niemiec, a senior engineering major from Laflin, Pa., made it to the semi-finals out of 62 debate



Speech and debate team member Sarah Mitrotz, standing at podium, is challenged by fellow team member Sarah Seman during a team practice. Also pictured, sitting from left, are David Cook, Casim Gomez and Nisarg Joshi. PHOTO BY VICKI MAYK.

teams at Liberty University with Cook also taking home an eighth-place speaker award. These debaters also participated in the quarterfinal round at Western Connecticut University and were ranked fifth and 14th in top speaker awards out of 124 competitors. Cook also brought home a third-place speaker trophy from the Navy Tournament at Annapolis.

As a member of the speech team, Niemiec earned first-place prizes in informative speaking at the Southern Northern Atlantic Forensics Union Tournament at Cedar Crest College and at Seton Hall University. Niemiec also won the coveted Ed Leonard Award at Seton Hall, one of the most prestigious awards in the competition. The award is given to the student who has exhibited passion, leadership and a competitive spirit throughout the year. Niemiec ranked 13th in the nation after competing at the American Forensics Association's National Tournament in Eau Claire, Wis.



The Wilkes speech and debate team displays its awards and trophies in Fenner Hall. PHOTO BY VICKI MAYK.

Cook, debate team president, attributes his success to the academic challenge and competitive nature of the sport. He says the most memorable experience was traveling with the team to President Barack Obama's Inauguration. "I'll never forget the history that was made that day."

Speech and debate team alumni also have fond memories of traveling with the team. Alfred G. Mueller II '93, interim assistant director of academic affairs at Penn State-Mont Alto, remembers traveling with former speech and debate team coach Bradford Kinney to Austin, Texas, where he had won a place in the prestigious Interstates Oratorical Competition. "We did not have the funds for a rental car. I think we walked over 20 miles during the three-day visit to Austin," Mueller recalls.

Kinney fondly reminisces about his group of students who were known as Kinney's Kids. "They were in fact just like my real children. Someone once asked me if they were all my kids; my students jokingly called me dad. From that point on, we became more like a family than a team," he says.

One of Kinney's Kids was Donna Sedor '85, executive vice president of the Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce. "I am grateful to Dr. Bradford Kinney for being a wonderful teacher and mentor. He pushed us to work hard, but at the same time, we had fun," says Sedor.

Sedor explains that participating on the team gave her confidence and taught her skills that she uses every day. "It was a great day for me when I set the Wilkes record, reaching 100 career trophies, and also the day when I was elected student lieutenant governor for our regional chapter of Pi Kappa Delta—a forensics honor society for undergraduate university students."

— *By Melanie Thomas, senior communications studies major.*



Blake Mycoskie, founder and chief shoe giver of TOMS Shoes, Inc., is the guest speaker for the 2010 Outstanding Leaders Forum. PHOTO COURTESY OF TOMS SHOES INC.

Chief Shoe Giver of TOMS Shoes to Present Outstanding Leaders Forum Lecture

Blake Mycoskie, founder and chief shoe giver of TOMS Shoes, Inc., will be the guest speaker for the seventh annual Outstanding Leaders Forum on Nov. 9. The 32-year-old entrepreneur will speak on “Conscious Capitalism and the Future of Business,” a talk focusing on running a financially successful business that promotes his ideal of “In tough times, give more!”

TOMS Shoes, Inc. donates a pair of new shoes to underprivileged children for every pair of shoes the company sells. Mycoskie’s idea for TOMS came during a visit to Argentina, where he witnessed the number of children without shoes who were at risk for soil-transmitted diseases and infectious cuts and sores. Many children were also unable to attend school because shoes were part of the required uniform. Since establishing TOMS in May 2006, Mycoskie’s One for One business model has enabled customers to help give over 400,000 pairs of new shoes to impoverished children in Africa, South America and New Orleans.

Mycoskie has been featured in a major national ad campaign for AT&T and his company was cited in the Bill Gates *Time* magazine article, “How to Fix Capitalism.” Mycoskie lives on a sailboat in Los Angeles, Calif.

For more information on the Outstanding Leaders Forum, see The Colonel Connection or contact Rebecca Van Jura at (800) WILKES-U, Ext. 4306 or rebecca.vanjura@wilkes.edu.



Wilkes Students Raise Pennies for Peace

Wilkes University students learned that spare change can change the world when they held a Pennies for Peace campaign in conjunction with the appearance of humanitarian Greg Mortenson at the Max M. Rosenn Lecture in Law and Humanities. The campaign raised \$1,563 to support schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The Pennies for Peace campaign is a program of Central Asia Institute (CAI), founded by Mortenson, author of *The New York Times* best seller, *Three Cups of Tea*. Mortenson delivered the Rosenn Lecture to a capacity crowd on April 25 at the F.M. Kirby Center. CAI is a nonprofit organization that promotes and provides community-based education and literacy programs, especially for girls, in remote mountain regions of Central Asia. Founded in 1996, CAI has built, to date, more than 100 schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which serve more than 28,000 students, 14,000 of whom are girls.

A competition among the 15 residence halls on the Wilkes campus highlighted the campaign. University Towers 1 and 2 raised the most money—\$127—and won an ice cream party, courtesy of Sodexo, the campus food service provider.



Jahmitza Perez '10 donates to the Pennies for Peace Campaign. PHOTO BY RACHEL STRAYER.

Alden Learning Commons Is New Addition to Farley Library

The Farley Library has a newly renovated study area that combines new technology with a cozy and collaborative learning environment. The Alden Learning Commons, located on the lower level of the library, debuted this spring.

The renovated space features four group study rooms, four diner-style group study areas and 16 small group study bays. Technology in the area includes Mac



The Alden Learning Commons features individual and group study spaces. PHOTO BY MICHAEL TOUEY.



Spaces for collaborative learning are a highlight in the Alden Learning Commons in Farley Library. PHOTO BY MICHAEL TOUEY.

computers, a white board projector and flat-screen televisions in the group study rooms. The area was designed to promote collaborative learning and provide a space for group projects.

Funding for the project included a \$75,000 grant from the Alden Trust and \$25,800 from Wilkes Student Government. The Alden funding paid for technology and furniture and student government paid for one of the group study rooms and the white board. Institutional funds covered the general construction costs, including new lighting, carpeting, paint and construction of the group study rooms and study areas.

Innovative Instructional Media Program Awards First Degrees

Ten educators and instructional media designers from the United States and Canada are the first graduates of the innovative online master's degree program in instructional media offered collaboratively by Wilkes University and Discovery Education.

Launched in June 2008, the 30-credit instructional media program prepares educators to engage today's students in learning through digital content. Graduates of the program are prepared to effectively blend academic rigor with the latest technology, from videos to Web 2.0 tools to virtual field trips.

"This master's in instructional media combines best practices in 21st century teaching with the outstanding expertise and media services from Discovery Education," says Michael Speziale, dean of the College of Graduate and Professional Studies. "We know our new graduates will have an immediate transformative effect on student understanding and achievement leveraging digital media that engages, inspires and ultimately helps each student live up to their fullest potential."

The instructional media degree program focuses on employing the latest technology and Web resources in the classroom. Courses include digital storytelling, differentiation supported by technology and digital media in the classroom. Course designers include nationally-known education technology leaders, including Kathy Schrock, Joe Brennan, Lance Rougeux and Steve Dembo.

Discovery Education and Wilkes University have worked together since 2005 to help educators integrate educational technology into classroom curriculum to ultimately improve student academic achievement. **For more information about the program and upcoming classes, visit www.discoveryeducation.com/masters.**