

The High School View

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Robots visit high school

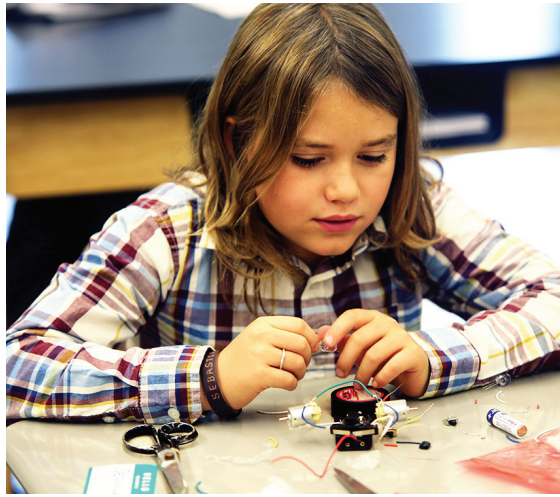
CASSIE CASEY

Island middle school students joined with high school students and teachers Saturday to study with Harvard and MIT students in one of the high school science labs, to write a computer program that would permit a robot to ride a bicycle.

Three college students came to the Island to inspire youth in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education with their SPOKES workshop. The program offered two different workshops, one specializing in robotics and the other focusing on computer programming. The program began last summer, when seven college students

interested in STEM, decided to bike across the country. They planned to stop at numerous schools to expose youth to engineering and programming.

President of the Edgartown school Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Deanna Ahern Layrd contacted the SPOKES group when they were in the middle of the country. She had been working to integrate STEM into the middle schools and high school, and thought the SPOKES workshop would be a great fit. Assistant principal Elliott Bennett, math teacher Mary Lee Carlomagno, Career Technical Education director Barbara-Jean Chauvin and Deanna Ahern Layrd were all part of a committee



Fifth grader Sebastian Alexander constructs a robot while a group of middle school students plan during the SPOKES workshop.



PHOTO BY JACK DAVIN

dedicated to encouraging after-school enrichment. The four set up a date with the college students to visit the high school.

Chemistry teacher Natalie Munn believes in helping students get more exposure

to engineering. She said, "After-school enrichment directly correlates with long-term interest through college. Interest in science generally begins in middle school, and if you provide enrichment to those students, they will

likely pursue a path of science after high school."

Edgartown school 7th grader Matthew Fish enjoyed the workshop, and wants more. He said, "I thought of my future when I decided to take this class."

Francesca Childs, a junior at Harvard said, "There are so many negative influences on learning, like overtesting. This workshop is self-directed and catered to each group. We want students to come away loving learning." **HSV**

Generations gather in song at fundraiser

KAELA VECCHIA-ZEITZ

Several generations of the high school's Minnesingers gathered last Friday at the Atria Restaurant for a homecoming auction to raise money for the group's 2017 trip to Europe. The Minnesingers have been around for 48 years, helping to develop musicians of all sorts. This year, instead of just holding a silent auction, the Minnesingers decided to make the event more meaningful — the night was a homecoming of generations. Sisters, grandparents, grandchildren, mothers, fathers, and sons and daughters all came together to sing. Current Minnesingers met and performed with alumni, creating an atmosphere of community and celebration.

Molly Conole, a Minnesinger from 1973 to 1976, has a daughter who is a current Minnesinger. She said, "Watching my daughter

Penelope perform and be a part of something that I was once in is magical. Minnesingers has helped her blossom in the same way that I did. A light comes out in her

happy that generations could share something so lovely."

The most anticipated performance of the night was the collaboration of past and present Minnesingers to sing "Al-



PHOTO BY JACK DAVIN

From left, ninth grader Harold Lawry V and current Minnesinger junior Ben Nadelstein sing "Alleluia" beside Minnesinger alumnus and high school math teacher Ken Debettencourt on Oct. 23.

when she performs, and I can't help but laugh and cry while watching her."

Senior Darby Patterson, current Minnesinger, was also moved by the musical connection last Friday night. She said, "Seeing relatives performing together was wonderful. Especially Belle Dinning's performance with her grandfather. It made me

leluia," a choral prayer. Senior Michaela Piche said, "Singing 'Alleluia' with the alumni and having the past Minnesinger director, Mr. Nute, conduct was an amazing experience."

Molly Conole organized the event with the help of other Minnesinger parents. She said, "We only had a month to put this all together, and I'm thrilled with how well ev-

erything went. Previous eras came ready to go, with sheet music and everything. It was like a time capsule."

The event helped the Minnesingers fundraise for their trip, and gave the students an opportunity to learn from alumni. Junior Ben Nadelstein has learned from Ken Debettencourt in more ways than one. As a freshman, Ben learned how to factor trinomials with Mr. D. as a math teacher, and as a junior he learned the tenor part for "Alleluia." Ben said, "When Mr. D. and I sang 'Alleluia' next to each other, I broke into a smile because it sounded so amazing."

Senior Penelope Dutton said, "The auction was all about bringing back the old to mix with the new. Getting to see people from all different ages and paths of life whose high school careers had been shaped by the Minnesingers really meant a lot to me. Being a part of something unique and important made me feel like I have so many opportunities here." **HSV**

Putting plastic to good use

JAMES KELLIHER

Soon, Islanders could be driving on plastic roads. That is, if three high school students interested in the environment have a say in the future of Vineyard highways.

"I've been passionate about the environment ever since I was a little kid. I hope to use my skills in science to fight the environmental crisis," said junior Daniel Gaines, the head of a group of students trying to make plastic roads a reality.

The group is collaborating with the Tisbury Water Works, which has been researching effective ways to drain rainwater off the roads. Daniel agreed to help with the project, along with fellow juniors David Webster and Brahmin Thurber-Carbone. Daniel was researching road surfaces that could drain water when he came across an article about plastic roads in the Netherlands. He believes that the idea could be applied to the Island.

The Netherlands focuses on using recycled plastics

for its roadways. They're a good alternative to asphalt because they are more durable, help reduce the harmful plastic crisis, and most important, produce a minimal amount of greenhouse gases compared with asphalt production. Plastic roads are made by melting down recycled plastic and then shaping it into road surfaces.

Daniel liked the idea of using plastic to make roads, but melting down plastic releases toxins, so he was determined to figure out a different way. He found that plastic can be broken down by acetone, and becomes malleable, or moldable to a desired shape.

The Tisbury Water Works has already conducted an experiment. The group broke down styrofoam coffee cups with acetone and shaped them into a ball. Only one-half of styrofoam waste is recycled in the U.S., so using it will be environmentally friendly.

"Our goal is to construct the first porous plastic sidewalk in the world," Daniel adds. "We're still in the research stages." **HSV**

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