

RoboLancers' Roundtable

Volume IV – June 2013

This is a newsletter dedicated to providing updates of what's going on to the sponsors of Central High School's robotics team, the RoboLancers [FRC Team #321; FTC Team #5320 and Team #6676]

WORDS TO THE WISE

By Daniel Ueda, Head Coach

What a year this has been! Two FTC teams went to the Pennsylvania State Championships, our FRC team won the Engineering Inspiration Award at two qualifiers and then at the Mid-Atlantic Robotics Championships, we sent 32 students and 6 mentors to the FIRST World Championships in St. Louis, we were invited to the State of STEM conference at the White House and sent two students to attend, we represented FIRST at the Rockwell Automation Fair, we hosted the third annual Philly Robotics Expo at Drexel for a crowd of 750 students, and in total we raised \$66,000 for our robotics program through grants, donations, fundraisers, and sponsorship. It's been a humbling experience to coach a team of students that are so ambitious, hard-working, and kind.



But now we move on to concentrate on next year. We ran elections for next year's officers and elected Etienne Jacquot as President, Callan Powell as Vice President, Keiana Smith as Secretary, Angely Iigura as Treasurer, Kamal Carter as Mechanical Lead, Steven Choe as Electrical Lead, Zhenying Wu as Programming Lead, and Thomas Davidenko as Marketing Lead. We started Spring Training to prepare the current students for next year. We will be building a new chassis and practicing programming a new shifting gearbox and driving. We are also planning off-season events this summer.

As this team has grown and accomplished more and more, we have required more support from sponsors and from mentors. None of this wonderful work would be possible without that support. Thank you to all our past supporters and please consider helping us again next season. If you would like to get involved with our team, please contact me.

WORLDS P.S.: ICE CREEAAAAM!

By Steven Choe, 273

While our team was out in St. Louis, Missouri, having a grand ol' time at the FIRST World Championship, every little aspect of the trip was enjoyable in its own way, well... almost. One thing in particular that I didn't really enjoy was the FOOD. Now don't take me the wrong way -- I absolutely love eating. It's like my job, everyday hobby, interest, whatever you wanna call it. You can say my stomach is literally a bottomless pit if you don't think I've emphasized myself enough, and there were a few good places there, such as the sandwich shop (Snarf's) and where we had our fancy dinner (J. F. Sanfillipo's). But anyway, our whole team had to get accustomed to consuming large amounts of fast food, cans of soda and bags of chips and candy at the hotels, and all the buffets. Even for me it became a struggle to have to digest all that horrible food -- both taste wise and nutrition wise. I put the blame on that food for making me feel like crap now.

On Friday night, we went to this "Italian" buffet (Maurizio's Pizza) with their small selection of either pizza, chicken wings, French fries, soft drinks, and pasta, I only had one plate. ONE PLATE! Right while I was in the middle of eating, I simply lost my appetite. The RoboLancers have become accustomed to eating pizza, I'm surprised I'm not sick of it, but that night was just different, which I know many of the other members can understand.

However, we were also scheduled that night to get some ice cream. Now, I had no idea where we were going for it, but it was ice cream and it was already being provided for so I had some hope left for the night, as it was already around 9:00 when we headed over there. When we got there (Ted Drewes Ice Cream), it looked like one of those typical ice cream stands like a Rita's but MUCH bigger. In fact, there were already huge lines forming. We all got in line, all 32 of us, and were told to pick whatever flavor we wanted. For some reason, I misunderstood and only got vanilla sadly. I mean like, out of all the other flavors available, why would you get JUST vanilla? But we all got our share,

and I found my vanilla ice cream better than most vanilla ice cream you would get elsewhere. Fortunately I also managed to taste some of the other flavors people got, like I think they had marshmallow fudge, pistachio, fudge, Oreo cookies, and a lot more. They had a huge selection; they were all sweet; and all had their own unique, creamy, delicious taste. Not one flavor tasted the same as another -- NONE! I was really satisfied with this wonderful ice cream. Local places are the best places. I hope by some chance we're able to go back there next year, and then I won't get vanilla again.

So, on behalf of the RoboLancers, I just want to give David Kahn a huge thanks for not only buying ice cream for the team, but also for all of his support in helping us acquire the large amount of funds we were able to raise for our trip to St. Louis. Ted Drewes Ice Cream was a rare opportunity we were bestowed with -- getting good free ice cream from a nice local stand, and just being at the World Championship with the team. Thanks for everything, Mr. Kahn. You have great taste in ice cream!



David Kahn, 220, and Anita Quain

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE: DINNER!!!

By Anita Quain

“DINNER!!!”

I have had the privilege of shouting this many times. Each Friday, during competition prep, I go to school after work and prepare a meal for about 60 hungry RoboLancers. These meals are usually donated by a parent(s), but set up and serving is needed as well.

“What’s for dinner, Mrs. Quain?” “You’ll see,” I reply.

Clean the tables, get out the plates, cups, napkins, warming trays, if needed, beverages.... I think we are ready! Okay, notify the troops. Within minutes, a line of wide-eyed, hungry, still energetic kids are lining up with HUGE smiles, ready to greet whatever meal they will be inhaling. All kidding aside, they are so grateful for whatever meal is prepared for them. Rarely, are there leftovers.

This has been a wonderful experience for me. The RoboLancers are an amazing bunch of kids who produce the most amazing robots. They are not only smart, but funny, polite, gracious and, well, awesome. Upon my arrival, there are many offers to assist with set up. The reward for me: the light in their eyes when they see the prep start, the eagerness when they are in line, and the camaraderie when they are sitting and eating with their team mates.

Under the guidance of Mr. Ueda, Mrs. Conrad, and several grads who serve as mentors, these kids have grown in so many ways. My son, Zack, has had an experience not to be forgotten. He has learned to address and speak to groups and has made great friends. It has made him decide to pursue his education in engineering and computer science.

Zack will be graduating this year. I will no longer be here to prepare the meals for the team. Luda Aslanukov

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A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE: DINNER!!!

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has offered to step up, but my experience is that it's always great to have several people helping. It can turn into late Fridays, so it's nice to have a backup.

Most importantly – please DONATE food or funds for the team. I know things are tough for many families – but this is for your child(ren). If you can send in a few dollars each week, \$20 each month, a tray of pasta now and then, beverages -- it will all go to the team for their Friday meal. They are so appreciative of EVERYTHING that is served! Pizza is their fave, but they have also had the experience of tasting various dishes prepared by parents and they LOVE the dishes.

Thank You to all the parents who have donated money, food and supplies this year!



The day before PRX was very hectic. Not only did we need to completely set up PRX (the booths, the FTC scrimmage field, hang signs, set up classes, and unload our robot), but we also needed to start packing for the FIRST World Championship since we were leaving at 7:00 a.m., the day after PRX.

A lot of people came to help with set up on Sunday. So many people came that every job was taken. I helped tape up posters and carry stuff for the scrimmages and booths. At one point when I had no jobs to do, I found a box filled with a ton of unsharpened pencils and sat down to sharpen them all. It was amazing how helpful everyone was with set up. At the end of the setup, Mr. Ueda gave us a pep talk about the importance of this event.

When I arrived at the Bossone the next morning, I was surprised to see everyone rushing around the building to take care of minor details. Then at just before 9:00 a.m., entire school buses of students began to arrive.

I was given two jobs that day. I had to be at the welcome table and at the RoboLancers' booth. At the welcome table, we helped hundreds of students and teachers get all the information they needed about their schedules for the day and provided them with additional information about the expo.

I stayed at the welcome table for about two hours, until registrations began to slow down. I then proceeded to the RoboLancers' booth to talk to visitors about our team. A few of the kids said they were planning to come to Central next year and they wanted to join the team. I also told students who were going to a high school other than Central to join their school's robotics team. I also spoke with parents who were interested in getting their children involved in a robotics team. I spoke with a woman from *TechnicallyPhilly* who took my picture with Stanley Umeweni who was manning the booth with me. She was a Central Alum and was amazed by how much our team has changed since the last time she heard of them.

THE THIRD ANNUAL PHILLY ROBOTICS EXPO

By Thomas Davidenko, 275

This year was my first year participating in the Philly Robotics Expo ("PRX"), which was held on Monday, April 22, 2013. PRX is a robotics expo held at Drexel University's Bossone Research Center. Hosted by the RoboLancers and presented by Drexel University, it was sponsored by many companies like Boeing, Villa, and LEGO Education. Also present were a few FRC, FTC and FLL teams. It was great to be a part of PRX because this event is completely student run by the RoboLancers.



While taking a lunch break, every kid running a workshop talked about how their workshops went and how many kids were in each workshop. Some workshops had as many as forty kids in them. Most of the workshops ran smoothly and the people who attended them were generally happy.



After lunch, I returned to the RoboLancers' booth to see a crowd of kids surrounding it. Ben Folk was manning the booth and our Rock Em' Sock Em' robot was there, too. All the kids wanted to take pictures with the robot and talk to him. They then started asking questions about our team, robot, and awards. They seemed genuinely interested in what I had to say, and in our mascot.



At the end of the day, all the sponsors began to disassemble their booths, and we began to pack up, too. When we finished loading our rented U-Haul truck, we took group pictures and celebrated the end of another successful PRX. We were all happy that all our hard work paid off. We were also excited for our fifteen hour trip to St. Louis the very next day.

It was great participating and volunteering at the Third Annual Philly Robotics Expo. I'm hoping next year we will be able to get even more sponsors and teams to join us there.



FRESHMAN ORIENTATION: 276!

By Jesse Holtzman, 273

Put yourself in the place of bashful, young eighth grade student as you step out of your mother's car onto the verdant front lawn of the high school you will begin attending early in the following autumn. As you begin climbing the serpentine pathway to the entrance of the building, you can make out a lively crowd surrounding the front doors, enveloping the stream of other prospective students as they enter the school. You reach the top and you can see now that the crowd is made up of, what seem to be, current students of the school, all cheering at the top of their lungs as they personally beckon you into the building. As you pass through the doorway, the cheers only multiply. You enter this coliseum of a high school, and your spectators stand, bellowing from all directions. You're guided through the main corridor by a flurrying gauntlet of motivational

acclamations and high-fives until you reach the doors of the school auditorium. You enter to see a number of buzzing adolescents seated that easily doubles the entire student body of your current school, but not a single one that you recognize. The initial shock passes and you find a seat, patiently waiting for someone to begin speaking on the large front stage that you face. This experience is Central High School's freshman orientation, or perhaps just how I remember it.

As a junior, it's been a short while since I've last been to a freshman orientation, but this year, because it was my first on the robotics team, and my sister was one of the incoming students, I decided to stick around. I must add that being on the other side of the orientation was a much less overwhelming experience. After they sat through the various speeches in the auditorium, the incoming freshmen were split into smaller groups, and given tours of the building. One stop on those tours, was our humble, basement robotics room. As each tour group passed by, several team members presented a brief demonstration of our robot, utilizing our post-season project of coding the robot to be used with a DJ Hero controller in addition to an explanation of our team and the FIRST robotics program.



Several of the students were clearly interested in the team as soon as they laid eyes on the robot and our modest workshop, which, alone, gave hope that we would be receiving plenty of new members next year. As they passed through, though, we explained to each group that the team is entirely student run, and robotics shouldn't only appeal the mechanically inclined, but also those who were interested in any field in science, technology, marketing, design, etc. After this, many more faces visibly brightened as they realized that there was a place on the team for them. Being able to inspire this was incredibly satisfying, because if the students we saw were anything like I was three years ago, then giving them something to be excited about and anticipate in the coming school year must have taken something incredible. Without a doubt, many of those we saw that evening will be joining the team, first thing come September, and as we've given them something to look forward to, I look forward to seeing what each one of

them is capable of, and just how far they can help us take the team next season.



SPRING TRAINING

By Alissa Sperling, Student-Teacher & Team Mentor

Spring Training has finished and it was a tremendous success! Over the past four weeks, mentors and team members came together to provide over 15 different robotics related workshops to the team. Nearly 50 team members participated in Spring Training and those members gained valuable skills that will support future competition seasons.

By far the most popular workshop was the CAD (computer aided design) course -- a two part workshop facilitated by team alumna and Drexel Engineering student Mary Conrad. In this course, students were challenged to use computer software to design robot parts and to consider the role of CAD in our own design process. Somewhat surprisingly, although seniors were not initially included in the Spring Training participants, many seniors elected to take this course to get a head start on their college coursework.

In addition to the scheduled workshops the RoboLancers enthusiastically embraced "Fun Fridays," where students enjoyed dodge ball and Frisbee.

The RoboLancers are looking forward to a productive competition season where they can put their new skills to use!



SALUTE TO THE 272 SENIORS!

PUNNOOSE CHERIAN

Growing up, I've always found mechanics and electronics fascinating. It wasn't until the senior year of high school that it occurred to me that our robotics team was the perfect place to be in order to get a taste of how robots work before I study engineering in college. When I first joined the RoboLancers community, I was surprised to see almost 200 students piled in one room. Ever since the first meeting, robotics kept on a busy schedule despite the horrendous college application process.



The toughest challenge I have faced in robotics was definitely to fit in. Being a senior and also a first year member of the team, I had to start from the very beginning. (Advice: Don't wait until upper-class years to join the team!) As time went by, however, tasks got easier and I was able to easily communicate with other people throughout the team. I realized that being part of the RoboLancers is not just about building robots but also working together as a family and having fun.

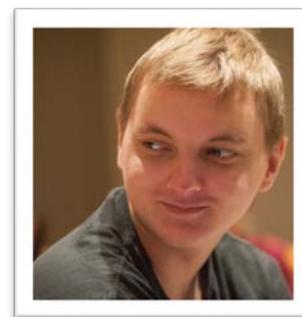
During the FTC and FRC competitions, the team as a whole had so much fun and enthusiasm that we started cheering for other teams. Even though in some competitions our robot did not do as well as we would have liked, our team spirit did not die once and we ultimately did every little thing we can to make our experience more fun.

The number one achievement of the team, in my opinion, was communication with family members for support. Initially, this team did not get any funding from the school district and we still succeeded in getting enough money to host PRX, build a decent robot, and many other things. When we were awarded our third engineering inspiration award at MAR, the team worked its hardest to raise money for the World Championship so as many people as possible on the team could attend.

The days I spend in this robotics team have become milestones that will be remembered for the rest of my life. When I attend Temple University to study electrical engineering in the fall, I will remember the times with the RoboLancers in which we have laughed, cheered, joked, smiled, and even been distressed.

DANIEL CONRAD

My most memorable experience on the RoboLancers was the World Championship in St. Louis this past April. I have never been with such a loving and caring group of people besides my family. The trip showed me that I had a group of people, a group of friends, as well as my family members, who were there for me and who cherished the moments we had together as a team. I will particularly remember the jokes, the stories, and most of all the time spent together as part of the Central High School RoboLancers.



While I may not have been as actively involved as others on the team with mechanical or electrical work, I would like to give everyone some advice. The team this year was by far the best group of kids I have ever seen in my history with the RoboLancers. There is so much talent and companionship shown throughout. One thing important to remember is pompousness will never get anyone anywhere. I have seen this throughout my life, particularly high school. I'm not saying there is pompousness on the team now; generally, everyone on the team this year has been pretty modest. But my word of advice for the future is that it should stay that way because that characteristic will only lead to the exclusion of others and hurt feelings. Everyone must remember when dealing with others, if someone does not comprehend something quite at first, those teaching the needed skills must be patient; everyone has their own unique way of learning as well as perceiving life. It always is important to remember that everyone has feelings and everyone, no matter how different, has a purpose on the team, and everyone's opinion truly is important.

Now that I am leaving a place where I feel I have spent a lifetime, I intend to attend Temple University. I plan to become a physical therapist and major in the field of kinesiology. The reasons why I want to go into this area are because I have always loved learning anatomy and physiology and I am really interested in applied kinesiology, or the movement of the body. I want to be able to help people with diseases or physical ailments.

I truly will miss all the fun times that I have shared with the RoboLancers. I will miss the inside jokes that

the team had as well as the after-school meetings. I really am sad to leave; I really wish I had four more years to experience the many competitions and involvement with FRC this team will experience over the next few years. I know I will be back to visit. I truly hope the present members who will be back next year and future members truly appreciate the time they have as a RoboLancer as I have this year.

ANTHONY CURRAN

My name is Anthony Curran and I am a senior on the RoboLancers. I have been on this team for two years now and with my senior year coming to a close, I know I am going to miss this team. Well, for me, I don't really refer to the



RoboLancers as my team but rather as my family because that is what we are -- a family. It is because of this family that in these two years I was able to get through some very tough and struggling times both in school and at home. It was because I could always turn to my family, the RoboLancers, for support and just happiness that I was able to get through it all and still am. I come to school every day with the anticipation of waiting for the day to be over and for robotics to start and to be working with the team again.

Now, we do build robots and all but we're also still a bunch of teenagers and when we're all together, we produce some of the funniest things said or done. There are so many hilarious moments which have happened on this team that it's very difficult to try and think of the funniest one. But if I were to pick one it'd probably be the times in the hotels at World's when we would all hang out in our rooms before curfew and would send hilarious voice messages to the ones who weren't in our room. When it was curfew and we went back to just the four of us who were in our hotel room, we still were up for hours every night just laughing at silly things we'd do when we were trying to fall asleep.

With all the time I've spent on this team, we've definitely made an enormous amount of memorable moments together but the most memorable moment is when we went to the FIRST World Championship for our first time in the RoboLancers' history! It not only introduced us to teams from all over the world but all the other possible designs for a robot, both simple and complex. Our trip to World's, however, without a doubt brought us even closer as a family. It's funny, everyone on the team is my friend but throughout this year, they

have become closer to me than any other friend I've made throughout high school. They are my brothers and my sisters. My family. And they will forever be held dear to my heart. I will miss them all so much.

I will be attending Penn State Abington and plan on taking the 2+2 program where I do my first two years at the Abington campus and then transfer to the main campus my junior year. It is because of robotics that I discovered what I want to major in and that's mechanical engineering! Woohoo!! I've made it my goal that during my time at Penn State, I will do everything in my power to get Penn State to sponsor the RoboLancers, or at least get involved with the team like other universities or organizations have before. Ever since I joined the team my junior year, I have always regretted not joining the team sooner. I always say that if I could hit the restart button for high school, the first thing I'd do is join robotics. I should've joined the team my freshman year but I had the notion that you had to have prior skills in order to be a part of the team. The whole point of our robotics team is to accept everyone regardless of prior knowledge of the field, if any. Our goal is to teach and create engineers and just amazing people this world will ever come to know.

If there's advice I could give to the new and future members, it would be to not be discouraged for not creating a robot that can do everything; to just focus on one or two main functions/tasks you want the robot to do and to stick with it. Also to remember that this team is your family as well and that you can come to any member if you are having trouble with anything. Now, I know it might not seem like much advice but that's only because my time with the RoboLancers isn't over yet. It has merely just started. I will spend the next four years, even more if time permits, returning as a mentor and just supporting and spreading the word of our team along with all of our accomplishments. So that's why I might not have that much advice to give at the moment but that it is only because I will still be here to greet and guide future members so I'll have plenty of advice to give them in person.

So as my time as a high school student comes to a close. I will look back at everything I've done while at Central and there's no question that my greatest memory is robotics. With that being said, it also means I will miss everyone that's a part of this family, all of my brothers and sisters. Yeah, I'll be back to mentor but it won't be the same not seeing everyone everyday as I am used to. I thank the RoboLancers for everything; I truly do. I couldn't imagine myself anywhere else. Good luck to you guys and I will still be nearby to see how all of you are doing.

STEVEN DUONG

It is hard to believe that it is the end of my senior year already. Four years at school but only two years with the RoboLancers. If I knew that I would have learned this much and had so much fun, I would have joined from day one. Still, the two years I have been with this team were the best years I have had. I am going to miss all the laughs, tears, and sweat from this experience. I am going to miss eating together and have those crazy moments. Most importantly I am going to miss the members of this team. I have become so attached to this team that it would feel like it is my job to come back and help. We are like family and it is like helping a younger sibling.



The most memorable experience I have is going to FIRST Championship. It started with the 16+ hour crazy bus ride. If that was not enough, I had three other crazy people sleeping with me, if we ever slept. Pranks, parties, and having fun was at the hotel. The competition on the other hand was a different story. I would never forget the massive stadium and the people inside it. Also I will never forget all the junk food that was eaten. Now I know, never share a room with an angry Irishman, a strong man, and my roommate. What happens in St. Louis, stays with the people and must never be spoken.

I have learned a thing or two about life. First, my social skills are to the sky compared to what I started with. Second, you can do anything in six weeks. This is going to help me on the road ahead. I am going to Drexel University next year with the financial help from Liberty Scholarship -- keeping the legacy alive of at least one RoboLancers member getting the scholarship. I would not have gotten this scholarship without being a RoboLancer and my participation and dedication to this team. Also from this experience, I have decided that my major will be in computer engineering.

This is my final writing I will have as a member of RoboLancers. It is hard to accept but I will be a mentor next year helping the students learn more than I have.

Current and soon to be previous lead programmer signing off.

ISLAND HUYNH

My name is Island Huynh and I joined Central's robotics team during my junior year of high school. Joining the RoboLancers was the best decision I have ever made. It has given me so much experience and opportunities that have helped pave the way to my future. I have not only learned to build robots, but also to build character. I have learned gracious professionalism as I work with other members of the team. It was also because of my involvement on the team that I was able to receive the Liberty Scholarship at Drexel University, where I will study to become a mechanical engineer.



My most memorable experience as a member of robotics was in St. Louis, where the RoboLancers participated in the FIRST World Championship. During that time, I was the team's second mascot. Although it was an exhausting job, I enjoyed getting the team hyped up as we cheered on our robot. It was exciting to see our team at Archimedes as we faced off against top FRC teams from all over the world. I was never more proud of my team; not because of our performance, but because of the hard work we put in to get there. I feel as though being at World's brought me closer to my team than ever before.

I truly love being a part of this team. Even though I will be leaving Central this year, I will always remain a RoboLancer.

DALE KALLAS

How *do* you say goodbye?

When I was first asked to write a farewell article for the RoboLancers' Roundtable, I put it off for as long as I could. I didn't want to have to think about my four years at Central coming to an end. How do you say goodbye to a place and all of the people who have been such a huge part of your life for four years?



When I look back on my time at Central I automatically think of the RoboLancers and I can't think of the RoboLancers without thinking of Mr. Ueda and Mrs. Conrad. I was lucky enough during my four years

at Central, to have had Mr. U as an advisor, and I also had him as my teacher for Engineering and also for Physics. He's one of those rare teachers who know how to make learning challenging, interesting, *and* fun. It was great getting to know him on a different level while working on the robotics team. I know I won't forget playing Ultimate Frisbee with Mr. U during a break at one of our competitions and I will definitely not forget traveling to Washington D.C. with Mr. U to hear the STEM of the Union Address at the White House!

Mrs. Conrad is the one that takes care of all of us. She feeds us and keeps us on track when we are preparing for competition. She has a great sense of humor and is always thinking ahead to the next competition and what it will take to get us there. I'll always remember walking around the Rockwell Automation Fair with Mrs. Conrad while we were trying to get companies to sponsor the team.

I strongly encourage any student who is thinking about joining the team to go ahead and join! Being on the team has been such a positive experience for me. Participating in the various competitions and seeing a robot that you helped build perform is really what it's all about. Competitions are loud, full of energy, nerve wracking, fun and really something that everyone should experience. I think that what I will miss most are the friends that I've made. I have had the opportunity to meet other students from different grades that I might not have met otherwise and we intend to stay in touch after graduation.

One of the funniest memories I have is wearing an Angry Birds costume and making the RoboLancers' Harlem Shake video with everyone on the team!



Being on the team has definitely had an influence on my college and career path. I have received an academic scholarship to Widener University and have been accepted into their School for Mechanical Engineering and will be starting there in the fall.

So, back to the big question: How *do* you say goodbye? I really don't know. So I'll just say: Thanks for everything!

JOHNSON KAN

My most memorable experience as a member of the RoboLancers was working with fellow team members at competition. At competition, I feel every member really comes together and has a single common thought. Our members work so hard together and give their absolute best. As a result, I would like to pass this advice on to new members: Work as hard as you possibly can at all times, just as if you were at a competition.



If I had the chance to do it all over again, I would have joined the team earlier. I would have also made sure everyone was focused and worked as hard as they possibly could at all times. I think there is room for improvement in terms of communication and time management.

Members on this team have positively influenced me in many ways, such as inspiring me to work with others and share the work. The other thing is, of course, socializing. I feel like the team gave me room to interact with other kids who have similar interests as me.

I remember the funniest thing that happened while I was a member of this team was when Ben [Ehrlich] started the "HUH?!" and the "NONONOONO NOOOO, STANLEY, NOOOO!"

My plan for the future is to continue my passion for photography as a professional. I plan to attend Drexel University to study marketing. Despite having an exciting future ahead, I am most certainly going to miss the family I've spent hours with -- the RoboLancers.

KEN LI

I had my doubts.

Back in middle school, I had a terrible experience being a part of robotics. My involvement was minimal; jobs were scarce or were mainly for those who had received formal training



and/or favoritism from the mentor. I never enjoy a single moment of it, ever! I came for most of the meetings, offering my help -- nothing. I dragged my little feet through rain and snow on the weekends to once again offer my help -- nothing. Why? Maybe there was no place for me.

But this is different.

The RoboLancers are nothing like that. Despite the smallness of Rooms 30 and 95, everyone finds a place to be somebody. Be it electrical, mechanical, or programming, there's a place, a comforting place, where I'm surrounded by people who share a common interest and appreciate my help whenever possible.

I don't regret my decision to join and be a member of our team. In fact, I am grateful to be received with so much love and energy that I'll regret leaving, having to say saying goodbye. Why? Because the RoboLancers are and always be my second home.

JUSTIN NACHEA

My most memorable time as a RoboLancer was this year at Chestnut Hill. I am quite known for doing Gangnam Style in Central as well as the RoboLancers. The song came on and everyone started chanting, "Justin Justin Justin".



So I started to dance and by some random chance, one of the field crew saw me and called me down to the field to dance. So, I ran down to the field after a bunch of my family members started screaming at me to go down there. I danced in front of a crowd of robotics teams. That is the most memorable moment in my time of being a RoboLancer.

I would not want to do anything all over again because I do not regret anything I did. MY plan for the future is to become a Mechanical Engineer and get a nice job. The college I am going to is Philadelphia University and I am going with almost all of it being paid for. I will miss the kids building the robots, the smell of the room after drilling through aluminum and burning wood. I will miss the laughs of everyone as we eat pizza at 6 pm because we are trying to finish the robot. I will miss the mentors and coaches of the family. That doesn't mean I will be gone for good. I will be back because I value the team as a family and the bonds I share with my family will never end. We are the RoboLancers, we are a team, we are a family. We aren't just kids with a set mind; we are the future of mankind.

KENNETH WEXLER

My most memorable experience as a RoboLancer...gosh, I'm not even sure. I suppose my most memorable experience would be the beginning of this year at the new member meeting.



The veteran members, who totaled somewhere between 15 and 20, went to advisories in the mornings during the first week or two of school and proceeded to request that people join the robotics team and come to the first meeting of the year in room 95. Now, room 95, being a lab room, is rather large. Yet, the room was so filled with new members that the old members were asked to leave the room to make space. There must have been over 150 people in that room that day. Now, see this from my eyes: in another extracurricular, my position was recruitment, so gaining new members was extremely important to me. So



New members meeting, September 2012

having the team increase in size by 500-600% made me so happy I could barely breathe. It was amazing.

Oh, and Worlds, but I imagine others have talked of it, so I'll let them have it.

I have a good bit of advice to give to new members:

First of all, and this is very important, robotics is never first on your list of important things, EVER. School is exponentially more important than robotics or any other extracurricular activity you may have. I learned this the hard way. The RoboLancers may be amazing, but they are still bound by the rules of clubs at CHS, so if you are put on academic ineligibility or social probation, you cannot participate in RoboLancers' activities. So, focus on school before you focus on robotics.

Second, if you plan on doing anything at all, you better be enthusiastic. I don't mean be obnoxious, but if you have a job, get it done as quickly, efficiently and correctly as possible. If you are slow with your task, you hold up other people. Which brings me to my next point...

Third, if you have a question, ask someone. I had no idea how to do anything when I first joined except for cutting PVC and using a hacksaw somewhat. I must have asked over a hundred questions in the beginning of my first full year, and that's not counting the questions I asked from March to June of the previous year. Asking questions does not make you sound dumb; it makes you smarter in the long run.

Last but not least, if you have an idea, present it to Ueda, Ms. Conrad, or a team leader. Sometimes, these ideas do good things or lead to even better ideas.

If there was one thing I could do over, other than join the team earlier, it would be last year's elections. I definitely feel that I should have run for president, and I hopefully would have won. I feel as though I would have been a better president simply because a leader needs to have leadership skills and not be set in the ways of any one sect in robotics. In other words, I wouldn't want a mechanical, electrical or programming lead to be president, because they only know what they've done and would like to do stuff with their hands rather than logistics and PR.

Being a member of this team has been life changing; it has given me skills that I will be able to use in my life as well as given me confidence and better route of finding myself than many other options. Quite frankly, I think robotics is one of the best things to have ever happened to me.

My funniest memory on this team would have to be Lenape in 2012. There was this one kid who I believe was on Storm (2729) that played a game of Ultimate Frisbee with us. He misheard us calling Keia by a nickname and proceeded to call her Bon-Qui-Qui for the entire competition. This was extremely funny, because he would show up randomly by our team, yell Bon-Qui-Qui, and nonchalantly walk away. This may not be the funniest memory, but it's the only one I remember vividly.

I am enrolled in Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Ueda's alma mater, in Troy, NY, as an intended Applied Physics major, though judging by what everyone has been telling me about college, that might change.

The thing that I will miss the most about this team is something that hasn't existed as widely as it did when we were only 30 members strong: the feeling of family. I loved that one RoboLancer could pull another aside and talk to them about a problem they were having with barely a question (except during build season of course). It made me feel safe and welcomed; it gave me the confidence to speak what I felt should be said and the knowledge that what I say can matter. I love that about this team. So if this gets seen by old and new members, let them know that this team is a family, and we should treat each other as such.

Submitted with an undying love for the RoboLancers, 272, CHS and MAR,

I remain the first ever official mascot of 321,

Kenneth Wexler



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Donations should be mailed to Central High School, 1700 West Olney Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19141 – Attention: Daniel Ueda, Head Coach.

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EDITION CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors:

Punnoose Cherian, 272
 Steven Choe, 273
 Daniel Conrad, 272
 Anthony Curran, 272
 Thomas Davidenko, 275
 Steven Duong, 272
 Jesse Holtzman, 273
 Island Huynh, 272
 Ho Chuen Kahn, 272
 Dale Kallas, 272
 Ken Li, 272
 Justin Nachea, 272
 Anita Quain
 Alissa Sperling
 Daniel Ueda
 Kenneth Wexler, 272

Editors:

Daniel Ueda
 Katherine Conrad

Photographs:

Brian Cheng, 273
 Mary Conrad, 270
 Angely Iigura, 273
 Ho Chuen Kan, 272
 Nadia Tran, 274
 Den Sweeney Photography

Contact us at:

RoboLancers

c/o Central High School
 1700 West Olney Avenue, Room 95
 Philadelphia, PA 19141
 215-276-5262
 robolancers@gmail.com
 www.robolancers.com

Head Coach: Daniel Ueda
Assistant Coach: Katherine Conrad

RoboLancers Officers:

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