

## **Feature: Quixilver**

Passionate about science, technology and winning competitions, the Leland Robotics Club, or Team Quixilver 604, combines teamwork and leadership to build and program robots as well as win awards for their hard work each year.

Ever since its commencement, Team Quixilver 604 has achieved much success, including four Regional Chairman's Awards, which competition judges bestow upon teams that have best demonstrated teamwork and a love for science and technology.

Just last year, the Robotics Club celebrated its 10-yr. anniversary. The club again rejoiced when one of the club's many mentors, Mrs. Best, won the club's second Woodie Flowers Finalist Award. **Helen Arrington**, Math Dept., won the club's first. This prestigious award distinguishes mentors who have inspired their robotics teams by employing superb communication skills. Also, during 2011, Team Quixilver 604 made it to the final round at the Google Silicon Valley Regional competition and was narrowly defeated by a later world champion team.

Currently led by Co-presidents and Seniors **Elizabeth Seger**, **Alec Simpson** and **Kunal Mehta** and Vice-Presidents Senior **Tej Modi** and Junior **Tyler Mori**, the club of more than 75 members is preparing for the 2012 FIRST, or For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology, Robotics Competition challenge "Rebound Rumble," which involves robotics teams from across Calif. forming alliances and controlling their robots to score as many basketballs as possible into hoops. Throughout the competition, the robots perform in three different ways – autonomously, by remote control or through the use of Microsoft Kinect – during designated time periods. The alliance teams compete to win various awards, and perhaps most importantly, the entire competition.

"There's not really a single thing that draws me to robotics, but if I had to pick something, it would have to be the competitions, going there with the team is an amazing experience," Junior **Sebastian Merz** said.

When not building robots or competing, the Leland Robotics Team mentors fellow high school teams from Gunderson High School, Valley Christian High School and Presentation High School, reinforcing and sharing their garnered knowledge about robotics. Through past mentoring, Team Quixilver 604 has helped other teams to prepare for upcoming competitions by reviewing the other teams' robot designs, discussing what materials are required to create a robot and developing common robot parts to save time.

The robotics club has also displayed finished robots at demonstrations, where members explain the purpose of the robots to various audiences. These demos have expanded from fundraising at Starbucks to inspiring students from Bret Harte Middle School and Simonds Elementary to create or join robotics teams. In the past, the Quixilver team has additionally done demos for senior citizens and disadvantaged schoolchildren in Pune, India.

"I enjoy being able to spend time with other people who share common interests, and I really like the team aspect of robotics, working together and hopefully winning together," Mehta said.

Whether interacting with the community, collaborating with other robotics teams or fighting to win a competition, Team Quixilver 604 shares a passion for teamwork, communication, science, and of course, robotics.

**Heather Nguyen**  
*Staff Writer*