

LY FOCUS

GOVERNMENT AND THE FALLS CHURCH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



APRIL 19-25, 2007

For more news about the Falls Church City Public Schools visit: www.fccps.org

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Mustang Robotics Team Goes to National Competition

Just four years ago, a group of students tapped into their technological and mechanical skills and started the George Mason High School Robotics Team. This year, the team has progressed far enough to be invited to compete at NASA's *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics International Competition in Atlanta, Georgia.

More than 300 robots built and operated by more than 10,000 students competed on six fields at the Georgia Dome over the past weekend. The Mustang Robotics Team 1418 put its robot to the test in this year's "Rack 'N' Roll" challenge. The game tests the students and their robots' abilities to hang inflated, colored tubes on pegs configured in rows and columns on a 10-foot high center "rack" structure, program a robotic vision system to navigate the robot and "lift" other robots more than 4 inches off the floor. The GMHS team came in number 22 out of 86 teams in the Curie division.

The team won four out of the seven preliminary matches of randomly selected teams from all over the United States. Each team is grouped with two other teams to form an alliance against three other robots. The



The George Mason High School Robotics team has competed in several competitions since it formed in 2003. Pictured are team members at a 2006 competition at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD.

GMHS team was the high scoring member of these alliances and lost when its robot developed a mechanical or electronic failure.

"The team worked hard the entire competition to get the best performance from our robot," said robotics sponsor John Ballou. "This was an important experience for our school in that we proved our design was capable of competing with the best."

FIRST is a not-for-profit organization that offers innovative programs that motivate young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math while building life skills. This is the first year the George Mason High School team has competed in the annual challenge.

Loudoun Students Visit FCC-TV

What better way to commemorate the life of founding father George Mason than to produce a play, create the costumes and videotape the production at George Mason High School? That's exactly what some creative visiting students from Loudoun Country Day School did recently. Their teacher is former FCCPS Cable Television Coordinator Vicki Knickerbocker, who is also a member of the Falls Church Cable Access Corporation, which is part of Falls Church Community Television. The field trip to the FCC-TV studio gave all of the students a chance to perform on camera and operate the technical equipment. Look for the production to debut on FCC-TV in the near future!



Loudoun Country Day School students assemble on the set in the FCC-TV studio at George Mason High School before recording their documentary on the life of George Mason.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

April	
16-27	VAAP, VGLA & VSEP Testing (TJ, MEH, GM)
13-23	IB Art Show (GM)
19	5:00 PM Wakefield @ Mason (Softball) 5:00 PM Clarke Co. @ Mason (G Tennis) 5:30 PM Mason @ Madison Co. (B Soccer) 6:00 PM Mason @ Briar Woods (G Lacrosse) 7:00 PM Band Exploration (MEH) 7:30 PM Briar Woods @ Mason (B Lacrosse)
20	String Solo/Ensemble (GM) 4:00 PM Mason @ Jeb Stuart (B Tennis) 4:00 PM Jeb Stuart @ Mason (G Tennis) 5:00 PM Madison Co. @ Mason (Softball) 7:00 PM Mason @ Madison Co. (Baseball)
21	2:30 PM Mason @ Potomac School (Baseball)
23-27	Book Fair (MEH)
23	4:00 PM Notre Dame @ Mason (Softball) 5:00 PM Mason @ Clarke Co. (Baseball) 7:00 PM Mason @ Dominion (G Lacrosse) 7:30 PM Dominion @ Mason (B Lacrosse)
24	4:15 PM National Cathedral @ Mason (G Tennis) 5:00 PM Mason @ Clarke Co. (Baseball & Softball) 6:30 PM School Board Work session (Chambers at City Hall) 7:00 PM Clarke Co. @ Mason (B Soccer) 7:00 PM Mason @ Clarke Co. (G Soccer) 7:30 PM School Board Meeting
25	4:00 PM Potomac @ Mason (B Tennis) 5:00 PM Mason @ Madison Co. (B/G Track) 7:00 PM Madison Co. @ Mason (G Soccer)
26	7:00 PM Spring JV Show 7:30 PM FLEAC Meeting (GM)
27	6:30 PM MEH Movie Night (MEH) Danny the Hippo's Birthday (MD)
30	IB Exams Begin (GM) (MD) Mt. Daniel Elementary (TJ) Thomas Jefferson Elementary (MEH) Mary Ellen Henderson Middle (GM) George Mason High

Check the FCCPS Web site for more calendar information.
www.fccps.org

FCC-TV Spotlight: Monster Madhouse LIVE

Save The Earth (Day) Marathon

Tune in to Falls Church Community Television (FCC-TV) on Earth Day, April 22, to watch the Monster Madhouse *LIVE Save the Earth (Day)* Marathon! It begins Saturday, April 21, at 8:00 p.m., with the debut of a two hour special commemorating the first season of MML. The marathon will end at 2:00 a.m. Monday morning with a replay of the most recent live broadcast. The show has attracted guests such as Tom Savini and local hosts Count Gore de Vol, and Dr. Sarcofiguy, and is nationally acclaimed for its style and creativity. You can watch Monster Madhouse LIVE at its regular time:

• Fridays & Saturdays at 10:00 p.m.

FCC-TV airs on Cox Channel 12, RCN Channel 2 and Verizon Channel 35. For a complete schedule of the variety of community programs on FCC-TV, visit www.fccv.net.



Monster Madhouse LIVE is now in its 2nd season on FCC-TV. The program is produced at the Falls Church studio and airs on public access stations across the country.



BIE Partners of the Week

Hoang's Grill and Sushi Bar

Nghia Hoang, Phuong Hoang, Lyly Hoang-Kuo

School Involvement: Donated fortune cookies to the Thomas Jefferson Second Grade China Festival; donated welcome lunch to a new teacher and mentor; donated gift certificates to Falls Church Education Foundation Gala and Auction.

Why Hoang's Grill and Sushi Bar is a BIE Partner: "We support the schools that are the heart of Falls Church. As a business in the center of the city, our philosophy of community involvement is core to our restaurant, and we welcome the opportunity to give back in any way possible."

For more information about sharing your expertise through the BIE Partnership, visit www.fccps.org or contact Marybeth Connelly at connellym@fccps.org.



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MEHMS BOOK FAIR!!!!

Here's a chance to support the Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School Library and pick up some great books at the same time. The MEHMS Book Fair will take place from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. on Monday, April 23 in the school library. The book fair is sponsored by the middle school PTA.

International Dinner to Feature Ethnic Cookbook

This year's George Mason High School International Dinner will feature the GMHS International Club Cookbook. This collection of ethnic recipes provided by local families was compiled by the GMHS International Club and is being sold as a student fundraiser to benefit Kokolopori, Falls Church's sister city in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The money will be used to help Kokolopori preserve its rainforest and the bonobo ape. The cookbooks are \$10.00 each.

GMHS International Dinner: Rescheduled for April 25

Get ready for the annual celebration of the city's diverse ethnic community by participating in George Mason High School's International Dinner. Due to inclement weather, this year's event had to be rescheduled for Wednesday April 25 at 6:30 p.m. in the high school's Mustang Café. The annual International Dinner is hosted by the GMHS International Club and sponsored by the PTSA and the ESOL/Foreign Language staff. The celebration draws more than 200 attendees enjoying a delicious array of ethnic foods and entertainment with an international flair.

Attendees should bring an entrée, side dish or salad for 8-10 people to share. Disposable containers are advised. Don't have time to cook? Bring a family size dish from one of our local ethnic restaurants! Desserts are provided by the PTSA.

Volunteers are also needed to make extra food and/or be part of the kitchen crew. If you would like to volunteer, contact Jane Cashin at 703-534-5247 or cashinjl@hotmail.com.