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LONG ISLAND



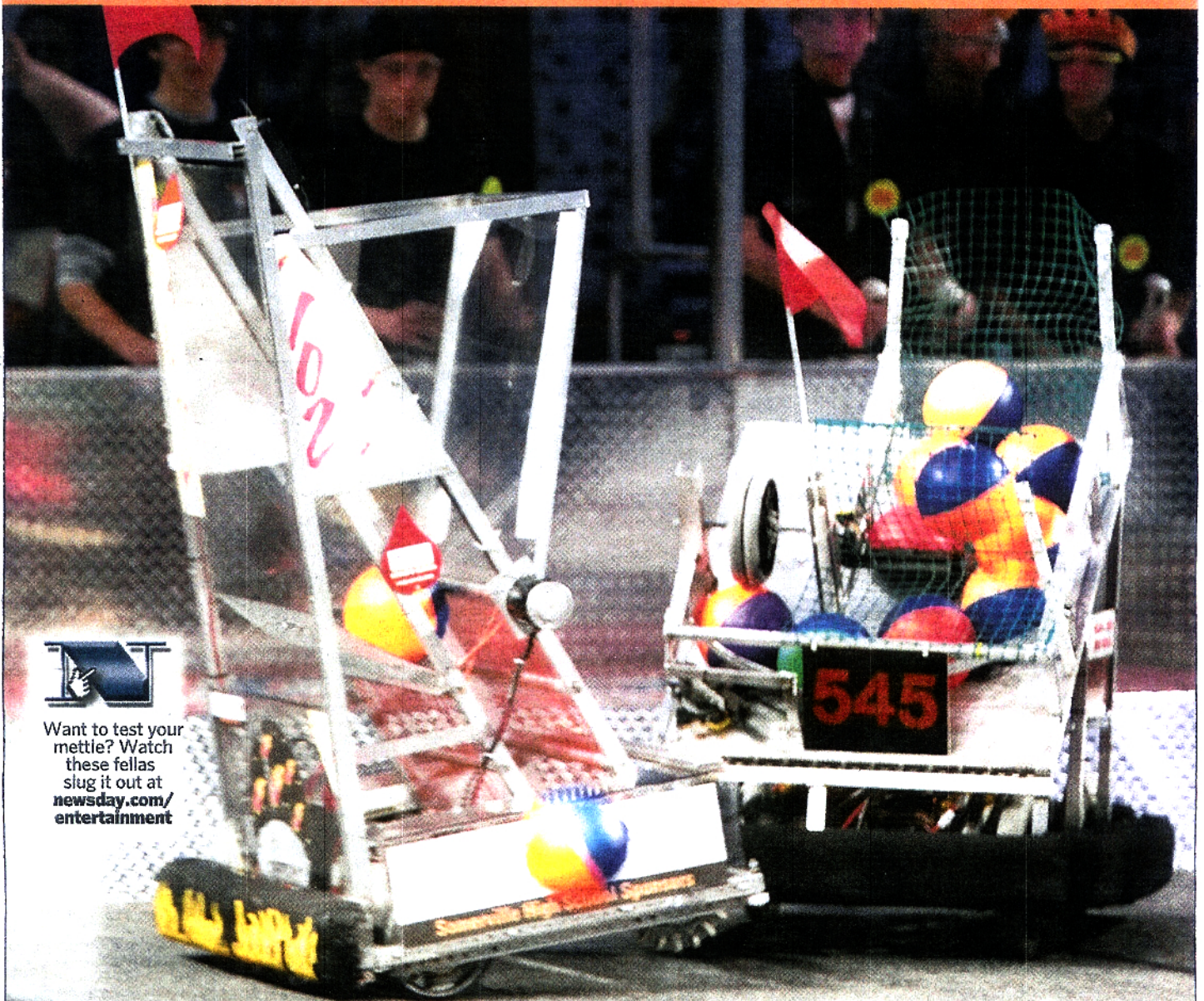
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MOVIES

'Blades of Glory' throws manhood and figure skating for a triple loop **B4**

Part 2



Want to test your mettle? Watch these fellas slug it out at newsday.com/entertainment

Machines built by local high-schoolers battle it out at Hofstra

Robot Wars

B2



WILD WEST OUT EAST. Take your posse to Bay Street Theatre in Sag Harbor for William Wyler's 1958 Western "The Big Country," starring Gregory Peck, then ponder "Hollywood: Then and Now" with Alec Baldwin, left, and Jeffrey Lyons, all at 7 tomorrow night. Tickets for film and discussion, \$50; 631-725-9500, baystreet.org or at box office.

part 2

MAESTRO



NEWSDAY PHOTO / TONY JEROME

Long Island Philharmonic musical director David Wiley

The Long Island Philharmonic and conductor David Wiley celebrate the music of Mozart with concerts in three venues this weekend — a feat the ensemble hasn't pulled off since 1997. Tonight at 8, "A Night of Mozart at the Patchogue Theatre" marks the orchestra's first-ever appearance there at 71 E. Main St., Patchogue (\$55, \$30).

Tomorrow and Sunday, respectively, the Philharmonic rolls into the Staller Center in Stony Brook at 8 p.m. (\$68, \$50) and the Tilles Center in Brookville at 7:30 p.m. (\$68, \$50, \$38) with "Mozart and More," featuring soloist Pip Clarke on violin. Buy tickets for the Patchogue Theatre at 631-207-1313, or for tickets to any of the three concerts, call the Philharmonic at 631-293-2222, visit 1 Huntington Quadrangle, Suite 2C21 in Melville or log on at liphilharmonic.org.

— JUDITH H. BERNSTEIN

COVER STORY

'Super Bowl for nerds'

BY JIM MERRITT
Special to Newsday

Do robots dream of winning the Olympics? If so, they'll have their chance at victory today and tomorrow at the David S. Mack Sports and Exhibition Complex at Hofstra University in Hempstead, which is hosting the island's annual robotics competition.

Officially known as the Long Island Regional FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition, and part of a national network of 30 regional contests involving 1,300 schools, the local event features robots designed, built and controlled by teams made up of more than 1,000 students from 34 Long Island high schools.

The 10,000 robotics fans expected to swarm the arena will see "robots moving all around the field, interacting with other, blocking each other as they try to score," says Scott Perry, 18, a member the Miller Place High School robotics team.

Also part of the robotics show: roaming character mascots, button-trading and NASCAR-style pits where students repair robots and send them back to the playing field.

"It's like the Super Bowl for nerds," Beryl Johnson-Seeberger, an 11th grade member of the Miller Place team, says of the spectacle. Miller Place robotics coach



NEWSDAY PHOTO / DAVID L. POIKRESS

Last year's winner — Miller Place High School — is ready for this weekend's competition.

Patrick Hughes considers this is a chance for non-athletes "to exercise and get a real world experience in a competitive format."

His students, who won last year's Chairman's Award for showing "gracious professionalism," have been preparing since January. That's when robot-making kits and the game rules, which change each year, were distributed in a kickoff at Stony Brook University by event sponsor the School Business Partnership of Long Island. The team had six weeks to assemble chains, pulleys, gears, wheels, wiring, tubing and other parts into a working robot.

Dubbed Jabberwocky after the Lewis Carroll poem, the Miller Place robot measures five-feet tall by about four feet wide and resembles a go-cart.

Like all the other robots in the contest, it's designed to pick up inner tubes and hang them on a rack in a game of three-dimensional tic-tac-toe.

The students — and their robots — will be recognized for design excellence, competitive play and sportsmanship in a contest that prizes maturity, professionalism, teamwork and mentoring.

"Our goal is to inspire kids to get interested in science and technology,"

WHEN&WHERE

David S. Mack Sports and Exhibition Complex on the Hofstra University north campus in Hempstead Today and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is free. Call 516-463-8499 for more information.

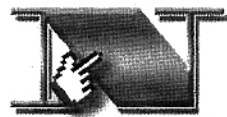
says Janet Anderson, director of Long Island FIRST. "We work together for the good of all," says Tony Kryl, team leader and technology teacher at Southold High School, which won the regional title last year in an alliance with Hauppauge and Bay Shore high schools.

TODAY

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