

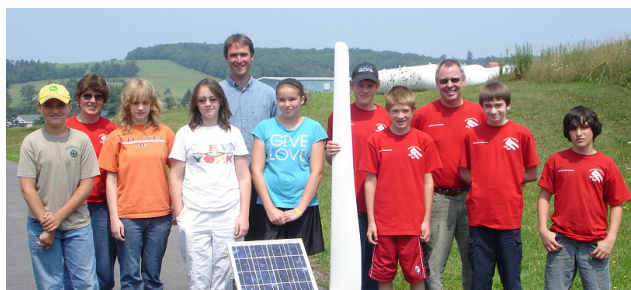
## Welcome to the **GEARS Newsletter...**

The **BIG NEWS** is that GEARs just received its Tax Exempt status from the IRS. For the adults, this means we are now officially a 501 (c) (3) Corporation, which also means that donations to GEARs are fully tax-deductible (going back to Nov 15, 2006). Keep reading to find out what else has been happening and what's coming up.

We've had a wide range of activities at GEARs over the summer break. The biggest events were definitely the Primary (years 1 & 2) and Elementary (years 3-5) Summer camps. Each of these 4-day events was topped off by a well-attended "family presentation" evening. The camp participants were able to show off their construction projects and multi-media presentations to family and friends. Over 50 children attended the camps, and well over 120 family members enjoyed the presentations. Thanks to teachers Trautwein, Lantz and Stem for running the camps, and Robotic Team 1629 members for helping out as volunteers.



4-H Robotics Series participants also returned to GEARs over the summer to design and build entries for the "Robotic Line Following" competition, organized in conjunction with the Garrett County Fair. Robots were judged on creativity, robustness, software and lap times. The robots were put on display in the 4-H pavilion during the fair, and the kids took time out to demonstrate their robots to Fair attendees. It was great exposure for LEGO and Robotic activities.



Although FIRST LEGO League (FLL) hasn't officially started yet, this year's game table is on display at the GEARs building. The official game rules (and scoring) won't be released until Sep 5<sup>th</sup>, so we set one field up to brainstorm the possible missions. This season's theme for FLL is "The Power Puzzle" and it focuses on alternate energy. To get us thinking about possible research projects,

Matt Sherald from PIMBY (Power In My Back Yard) came to GEARs and gave the FLL kids some great alternative energy demonstrations, involving solar panels and wind turbines. We hope to work more with Matt in the future, and visit some Garrett County alternative energy sites.

In another off-season competition, FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) Team 1629 took their robot, Meshach 3.0, to Baltimore in August to compete. Meshach had undergone several upgrades to its drive system and manipulator, so this was a chance to try out the changes. These off-season matches are also a great opportunity for the teams to get together in a less stressful competition environment, and develop working relationships with kids from other areas and walks of life. At the end of qualifying matches, Team 1629 was 7<sup>th</sup> seed, but they were able to upset the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> seeds to play in the Finals. In the end, our alliance couldn't overcome the 1<sup>st</sup> seeded alliance, but it was great to see all the new rookie members who will be competing for real next year. January 2008 here we come!



### Final Thoughts:

It's great to see students from Grades 1-12 having fun with robotics at the GEARs Center. Part of **my** passion for robotics has come from working with underwater robots. (*That's me next to a robot that goes down 20,000 ft.*) Since moving to Garrett County, it's been a goal of mine to establish a local underwater robotics team or competition, so I've finally set myself the personal goal of running our own **Underwater Robotics** camp at GEARs next summer. What better way to mix fun and learning in the summer? Add water! So, between now and then I'm going to be making some serious plans. I'll be looking for equipment, helpers and several "wet" locations where we can try running our (much smaller) robots. If you have any ideas, please give me a call (301) 387.2331.



Phil Malone.

## Don't miss **SuGO Sunday**. This weekend: September 2nd!

GEARS is now running half-day "Sumo LEGO" competitions on the **first Sunday of each month**.

In August we had 9 teams compete, and the robot designs just keep getting better and better.

It's easy to join in. 1) You turn up, 2) you build LEGO robots, and then 3) you let them fight for domination on a mini sumo ring. We provide all the LEGOs and help that you need.

SuGO is **free** for teams with at least one GEARs member,  
or else it's just \$10 per team for 4 hours of fun.

We invite parents to bring their kids and join us **THIS SUNDAY** from 1:00pm – 5:00pm at the GEARs Center on Industrial Park Drive, in Accident MD. For more info, visit [SuGO.GEARsinc.org](http://SuGO.GEARsinc.org)

**Ready ... Set ... SuGO!!**

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