

Cyber Blue strives to *power up* new season

By Payton Romans

This year marks the 20th anniversary of PMHS' robotics team, starting in 1998.

The team had their open house on Feb. 22 to inform families and attendees of their new theme, and reveal the new video-game-inspired competitive season.

With the coming of a new robotics season comes a new game. Every January, the FIRST organization -- For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology -- puts out an animated video explaining the goal, theme, and objective of this season's robotics competition.

Last year, the game was entitled "Steamworks" and involved two teams, each made up of three groups consisting of three people from one school.

The objective was to have your robot install gears, collect fuel to build steam pressure, and climb up a podium before the clock reached zero.

Perry's robotics Team 234 celebrated the theme with homemade gear hats and outfits with capes at their competitions, and this year they said they are equally excited to participate in the newest game to be released by FIRST, entitled "Power Up."

"Power Up" involves two alliances of video game characters (the robots) and human operators trapped in an arcade game.

In order to get out, the operators must collect power cubes to change a series of switches and scales, climb platforms, and defeat the boss.

The game had the entire team gathered around the computer in the Cyber Blue lab the night of the release,



Junior Ryan Herrington and senior Alivia Shake start the presentation on how Lightning works and to demonstrate how it will compete in "Power Up" (Photo by Payton Romans).

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In fact, by the time of the Robotics open house when the team revealed the game to the attendees, team members were quoting under their breath the video they had memorized after listening to them over and over again for weeks prior to the open

house.

"probably about 100 billion times," says junior **Pethpranee Unchit**, who works on marketing the team and broadcasting its message across the school and is in her second year on the team.

"Everyone knows that once the

game is revealed, that's when the work begins. We stay after school and watch the video a thousand times to make sure we have every detail noted," says Unchit.

"Everyone has a specific responsibility on the team but they aren't limited to just that job," says sophomore

Addison Holfner.

After the video is released, the new rule book read, and the manual studied, the designers begin their work.

They doodle their prototypes on white boards, and discuss which route they should use to ensure a successful season.

After that, the assembly team begins to create the new bots-One prototype, one practice bot, and one for competing.

The team has six weeks to build their robot before they move on to their first competition.

After they compete, they are permitted by FIRST to continue to make improvements on the bot to better their performance.

Throughout the years, Perry robotics students have coined their robots with a special names.

With hits like The Steel Falcon (1999) and Beef Shredder (2002), the team is ready to reveal the bot's newest name, 'Lightning.'

The inspiration came after junior **Ben Fair** created a video to announce the new robot, featuring Lightning McQueen's intro speech from the Disney movie *Cars*.

The team recently returned from Miami Valley Regional, their first meet of the season in Dayton, Ohio, Feb. 27 through March 3. They placed out of 61 teams. The next meet, St. Joseph District Event, is in Mishawaka Friday through Sunday. The team is hopeful for more Perry students to come and watch their competitions this season.

"Robotics competitions are just as, if not more, fun than a football game," says senior **Alivia Shake**.

Inside scoop on not-so-secret menu items

By Jess Hess

When junior **Gracee Dale** wants a snack at the end of a Taco Bell shift, she grabs a cheesy Gordita crunch with a nacho cheese taco shell. It's one of her favorites among about ten items.

The first secret menu came from In-N-Out, the popular west coast food chain, which makes all of its food fresh and to order. The menu is now known to consumers as the "not-so-secret" menu and is advertised on the website as such.

For many fast food chains, the "secret" menu is made by the customers, and spread around online, gaining publicity as orderable items. Some of these include the "apple pie McFlurry." It is an entire McDonalds apple pie, blended into a McFlurry, just as the

name suggests.

Taco Bell managers teach their new employees how to make "secret menu" items, but that isn't always the case at other fast-food restaurants. Junior **Kaitlyn Egan** who has worked for nearly three years at McDonald's has people who order unusual requests, but not with "secret" names. She says "either they order it without the special name, or they order it as how someone would normally order something special."

One of the special items is ordering a McDoube as a Big Mac. Egan says "instead of a huge Big Mac, it's kind of just a smaller Big Mac. They ask for just special sauce, lettuce, pickle, and whatever else." Another adjustment people ask for at McDonald's is

unsalted fries.

"Instead of a huge Big Mac, it's kind of just a smaller Big Mac. They ask for just special sauce, lettuce, pickle, and whatever else."
-Junior Kaitlyn Egan

As for the online secret menu which circulates social media, Egan says she's never heard or witnessed someone order something from there. Dale agrees, saying "not very many people order the secret menu." In fact,

she was trained after someone ordered something from it.

"I was just trained by someone who told me what goes in whatever secret food it was that they ordered. That was it on the training," she says.

Taco Bell's secret menu includes the enchirito, an item previously on the main menu. It is an enchilada stuffed with beef, beans and cheese. Another item is the chili-cheese burrito, which is chili cheese rolled into a tortilla.

Despite the massive amounts of items there, and the relevance of big order changes, one of the most popular items is just a simple alteration; cooking chicken nuggets just a bit longer. Senior **Justine Ling** says "I like the well done chicken nuggets. McDonald's usually has good chicken nuggets, but

they are usually not as fresh as they could be." She adds, "I think waiting 5 minutes for fresh chicken nuggets is worth the wait."

While the secret menu provides variety, Egan says that "it's cool and all, but I know that it makes it harder for people who work in grill. I've had to sit there and make long special requests."

Dale, who orders secret menu items often, says, "the secret menu isn't a waste of time. Honestly it's good to have one, it's other food than what the normal person gets. And plus, it's phenomenal."