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**TUESDAY,
JANUARY 26,
2016**

Volume 184 | Issue 1

technewsiit.com

TechNews

Student newspaper of Illinois Institute of Technology since 1928

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President's Student Advisory Council meeting addresses student concerns

Naila Opiangah
TECHNEWS WRITER

The President's Student Advisory Council Update (PSAC) meeting was held on January 21, 2015 in the President's conference room. President Cramb, Provost Bronet and 10 PSAC members were present. The discussion was geared around the subjects voted in the previous members' meeting on January 18th 2015. They were articulated as follows:

Concerns about the board of trustees: The President was asked about the participation of trustees in career fairs and the lack of involvement they have on campus. He acknowledged that the PSAC already voiced that concern and that he will present it to the board at their next meeting on February 18.

The school's position concerning difficult weather: The President was asked to clarify the school's position concerning difficult weather. Many students expect that the school would close in condition of heavy snow or very low temperature. The President agreed about clarifying that the school will not close. PSAC members expressed their concern regarding commuter students who would be more likely to be affected by the weather and asked President Cramb if the teachers could be more understanding of their situation. They proposed that late arrival and absences due to the weather get treated on a case-by-case basis by the teachers. The President agreed to discuss the subject with the faculty counselor before making a decision.

Concerning the school's faculty: The PSAC members asked the President and the Provost to clarify the hierarchy and organization of the school's faculty so students

with the Deans about it. The members also talked about the situation of several professors who push students to attend classes and work beyond the assigned time. The Provost decided



Photo by Naila Opiangah

get a proper understanding on the role of each member. In fact, they believe that many students do not know where to go and how to proceed when they face particular situations. It was also asked that Deans be made more accessible and tighten their relationship with the student body. Both President Cramb and Provost Bronet agreed to the request to discuss

to talk to vice Provosts in order to make sure that faculty members avoid making a similar situation happen again.

The true cost of living off-campus: The PSAC wanted to gather data and analyze the number of students living off-campus and the financial causes for that. They expressed their will to do a thorough study and present it

to President Cramb. It was suggested that they put together a survey that will be shared to the student body. The President encouraged the approach and assured the support of his office. Yet he requested that the comparison between students living on and off campus be fair and acknowledge every element involved in both cases.

The President acknowledged the bad performance of the meal plans and asked for the PSAC to come with a set of suggestions to better it. PSAC members also voiced their concern on how the food served in the Commons is presented and wished that more care was given in the preparation of the meals. President Cramb agreed that a better approach should be taken by the Commons.

Concerning Vandercook and Shimer: It was asked that IIT collaborate better with Vandercook and Shimer. The students attending these colleges are often unable to participate in the school's activities due to their class schedule that is not articulated around those of IIT students. It is an unfortunate situation for them because they too pay for SAF. President Cramb explained that he already had a discussion with Shimer's administration about lining up courses. He has not had a conversation with Vandercook administration yet but wished the students of both colleges expressed their concerns regarding the link up in order to have an effective discussion. In fact, if the students of these colleges do not feel the need to link up their schedule to IIT, the discussion would not be relevant.

Information sessions to be held for Museum of Science & Industry volunteer, internship positions

Kori Bowns
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Museum of Science and Industry (MSI) is the largest science museum in the western hemisphere, holding over 35 thousand artifacts and nearly 14 acres of interactive exhibits and experiences. The museum's home is the former Palace of Fine Arts building from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood, and it opened in 1933 under philanthropist Julius Rosenwald's vision to create a hands-on industry museum in the United States. Each year, the museum works toward achieving its mission to "inspire the inventive genius in everyone" with the help of several Illinois Tech students.

Each semester, undergraduate students from IIT have a unique service

learning opportunity at the Museum of Science and Industry through the MSI Internship Program. Students apply to spend a few days during the semester volunteering at the museum, leading science demonstrations to the museum's general audience. Volunteers who complete a required minimum number of volunteer hours at the museum also qualify to apply for a paid internship at MSI over the summer. Last year's internship students learned a variety of demonstrations and presented them to over 35 thousand museum guests.

In order to become eligible for the internship, students must first attend an information session held early in the semester and apply to volunteer at the museum over the course of the fall or spring semester during the academic year. During the semester, these students learn to present three interactive and

hands-on demonstrations to museum guests. Volunteers work alongside lead interns, who were summer interns in previous years, to receive coaching and support as they learn more about presenting to different audiences and speaking in public. Demonstrations done by volunteers cover topics including sound, electricity, and Newton's Laws.

Twelve volunteers are accepted to the program each semester. Upon completion of 20 total volunteer hours in a semester, the volunteers qualify to apply for one of the summer internship positions, where they learn larger programs and work full-time.

The MSI-IIT internship partnership is now entering its eighth year. This partnership began with a common trustee between IIT and MSI, and the program aims to foster communication skills in students while making science education accessible to the

community through the delivery of several fun and interactive live science demonstrations at MSI.

In order to apply for the MSI-IIT volunteership and internship program, interested students must attend information sessions being held next month on Tuesday, February 9, Wednesday, February 10, and Thursday, February 11. All of the information sessions will take place at 12:45 p.m.; Tuesday's information session will take place in the MTCC Executive Conference Room, Wednesday's information session will be held in the MTCC Auditorium, and Thursday's information session will be held in Rettaliata Engineering Center room 124. Contact Kylie Kosulic at kylie.kosulic@msichicago.org with any additional questions.



Photos by Kori Bowns

TechNews

STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SINCE 1928

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TechNews is published on the Tuesday of each week of the academic year. Deadline for all submissions and announcements is 11:59 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. Articles, photos, and illustrations must be submitted electronically to the TechNews website at technewsiit.com.

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Let’s kill cynicism before it kills this campus

Soren Spicknall

TECHNEWS WRITER

For the last several years, Illinois Tech has consistently ranked near the top of The Princeton Review’s annual list of “Least Happy Schools”. While the metrics used to make such rankings are always inherently dubious, there is some merit to that dishonorable title. Despite the consistently stellar outcomes of an IIT education and the university’s ability to attract more and more new undergraduates each year, students seem to become disenchanted at an alarming pace once they start their studies here. Some among the school’s faculty have remarked that such a poor happiness ranking likely has to do with the rigor of classes and the general academic focus of the institution, but that perspective seems to ignore the fact that pride can overcome academic challenge, as if evidenced by many other largely technological universities across the nation which score well on student life metrics, such as MIT and Carnegie Mellon University. And besides, hard work alone does not cause a negative campus atmosphere; there is much more to it than the academic side of the story.

Before even entering IIT as a freshman, I had already come across some degree of negativity from current students. During Scholarship Weekend that February, Camras Scholars hosting visiting Illinois Tech applicants had occasionally let slip little bits of intriguingly troubling information about the school’s staff, various student organizations, and other entities on campus that could be blamed for some negative aspect of their life. During my freshman year, I was continually bombarded with comments from older students, speaking with authority, claiming that some office or another was corrupt, that Finance Board was incompetent, that Sodexo was an actively malicious organization, and so on. Given that it was my first year, I didn’t yet have the resources to form my own opinions, and if it hadn’t have been for a few more positive-thinking individuals in my life, I would never have bothered to get involved in campus life and find out the truth: very little of the jaded assumptions of our student body have any basis in reality.

In the Fall semester of 2015, the Student Government Association (SGA) held a well-publicized Town Hall meeting on the topic of dining feedback and improvements. During the course of the event, perhaps 50 students came through, speaking directly to a panel composed of IIT Dining Services staff, university administration involved in meal plan formulation, and Ricky Stevens, who was then the head of the student-led Food Advisory Board (FAB). Throughout the event, all those involved stressed student participation in the latter organization as a way to have their input heard on a regular basis. Food Advisory Board was mentioned at least ten times during the Town Hall, but when all was said and done, I walked into to the next FAB meeting that week representing IIT’s Residence Hall Association, as I usually do, to find no new faces in the room. The students who had participated in the Dining Town Hall had taken the opportunity to vent their frustrations at Dining staff, but had decided not to follow up and join the productive conversation that is had within FAB. This phenomenon is common on this campus, when even our most outspoken voices deny themselves the chance to make real change by dismissing available methods of real, impactful advising. This is generally followed by vocal pessimism passed on to others, perpetuating the cycle of cynicism.

When the new fire alarm policy was put in place for residential buildings on campus last Fall, the initial email sent out on the topic angered the vast majority of residents and was cause for a great amount of discussion over the following week and beyond. I heard over and over again that Residence and Greek Life (RGL) and Dean of Students Katie Stetz

had “gone rogue” and that students had no power to make their voice heard or to change the decision. During that same time, Dean Stetz made appointments available for any student wishing to offer input on the policy, and barely two weeks after the announcement, the Residence Hall Association (RHA) made feedback about it the topic of a Hall Council Leadership meeting, which includes its executive board (all students) and executive liaisons, who represent each section of the residence halls. Speaking with Nikki Dunham from RGL, they gained clarification about the grounds for a fine, and agreed to prepare an email sent from RHA to each resident explaining some of the most pressing questions about the policy. In addition, Dunham stressed that the policy was fluid and was intended to be changed based on student feedback, a point stressed in RHA’s explanation email as well. When many students were decrying the policy as yet another sign that IIT’s administration had no care for its students, IIT’s administration was working hard to give its students as much input and access as possible.

When I first became involved in a few student organizations on campus, I often heard complaints about how the Student Activities Fund (SAF) was distributed. Common threads of conversation involved Union Board (UB)’s perennially large allocation, comments about how it used to be much easier to get money from OCL before the advent of the current system (a point I can’t comment on with any expertise, since I’ve only been involved in recent years), and complaints about inadequate funding for new or small organizations. To the first point, students don’t seem to realize that a huge amount of UB’s funding goes directly to other organizations’ events, since every Bog-hosted event is partnered with and funded by UB. Additionally, UB is one of the largest and most active student orgs on campus, and has a long history of putting on impactful, well-planned events. It’s natural that they receive a large amount of funding, since they’ve proven that they are capable of using it efficiently. To the second point, it should be noted that SAF proposals exist because Finance Board is made up of a small group of students, run through SGA, that manages funding for all 220 registered student organizations at IIT, and their work is rather impressive with that in mind. If such a system didn’t exist, it would be up to the direct discretion of OCL, not students, to determine what proposals merit funding. Finally, our Student Activities Fund is incredible in size for a university with such a small undergraduate population, and the financial freedom given to student organizations here is almost without peer. WIIT’s executive board, then all new, proposed for \$50,000 to fund Bill Nye’s visit at the beginning of this academic year, and not only was that funding granted, but OCL took on much of the contract negotiation and logistics for them. I am currently part of a small group of students working to revive the Illinois Tech Model Railroad, and OCL staff obtained permission for us to enter the empty Main Building and retrieve equipment that belonged to the club historically, something they had no obligation to do, especially for a group that wasn’t yet even reactivated as a student organization. Both of these groups were unproven in the eyes of OCL or Finance Board, but we were granted significant funding or powers based on the quality of our proposals.

Of course, while trying to avoid cynicism, it’s also important to keep idealism in check as well. I am fully aware that there are large issues facing this school, both in campus life and in the academic realm. One of my organizations had its leaders chosen for it at one point by OCL, and then the next year by an SGA committee, both of which were unpopular among members and were destabilizing to the organization in the short term. And no matter what RHA advises, there

are just some building upgrades that won’t be done, especially in residential complexes with limited lifespan. President Cramb has said there are approximately eight years left for MSV in its current form. No matter what goes on in a Food Advisory Board meeting, Sodexo is still a private company, and will have to make a profit. One of the most important points to make is that, in order for all of the school’s input systems to work properly, they must be properly publicized and regulated. SGA has a responsibility to advertise open Senate seats and put as much information out as possible about our elections, and at times that responsibility hasn’t been fulfilled. Many other organizations and offices face similar visibility and policy issues. In addition to enthusiastically joining many organizations, I’ve also worked to improve them and combat problems that arise. I’ve rewritten two student organization constitutions to make sure they comply to their own rules, I’ve become unintentionally privy to inter-office drama at times when searching for funding information for organizations, and I’ve even recently submitted a Judicial Board petition in the hopes of ruling certain SGA actions illegal.

I don’t see Illinois Tech as some perfect environment, but I do see in the school plenty of opportunity for input and change. For an institution with barely 3,000 undergraduates, the variety of our food service is frankly amazing. IIT Dining staff manage seven separate locations, providing options for a huge variety of religious, health-related, and voluntary dietary restrictions. Quality and customer service have both improved as a result of input from the Food Advisory Board, organized by students. That direct decision-making is a hallmark of many of our professional offices: it’s downright easy to make an appointment with most of our academic Deans, department heads, and campus life staff members. On the subject of student organizations, joining SGA or attending its meetings is a great way to have control over approval of each new organization, as well as funding for each organization. Additionally, SGA has a measurable impact on professional offices, organizing Town Hall meetings and representing the students to academic and administrative staff members.

The problem with IIT isn’t Dean Stetz, Sodexo, Finance Board, or whatever else you were told your first few years here and perhaps perpetuated to the students who arrived here after you. The problem is our cycle of cynicism, wherein we constantly deny ourselves opportunities to create change based on the supposed fact that we’re up against a big, well-oiled machine designed to suck money and make students unhappy. The thing is, in the end we’re in control of that machine, and it won’t work properly unless more of us take up the reins and take steps toward the things we want to see implemented. When only six percent of students vote for SGA’s executive board, we can’t reasonably expect them to represent us accurately. When only half of all residence hall floors have an active Floor Representative, we won’t see our views communicated to RGL. When we dismiss certain staff members based on assumptions, we will never learn how dedicated, engaged, and hardworking the members of OCL, the Office of Student Affairs, IIT Dining, our colleges, and more really are. Some of the burden lies with the institutions of this university, but most of it lies with us in the end. If we sit here, jaded, and declare that Illinois Tech’s interests aren’t with its students, those interests never will be. But if we speak up, join organizations, and find the channels that already exist to communicate our concerns, we can build a positive campus from here. It’s up to us to change the narrative, and kill cynicism before it kills this campus.

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Partnership between Career Services, start-up company provides students paid projects

Austin Gonzalez
OPINION EDITOR

On the last day of 2015, IIT’s Career Services sent out an announcement for “an exciting initiative at Illinois Institute of Technology.” The initiative is for special, short-term paid projects with companies to become available for students. While initially I was interested in the work being done by Career Services, I’ve learned more about the exact arrangement and I think there is cause for concern.

Career Services is working with start-up Parker Dewey so students “will have the opportunity to work on projects with some of Chicago’s leading companies, emerging visionaries, and exciting non-profit organizations.” At the information meeting, I

had a chance to talk with Jeffery Moss and his vision for “career launchers.” Moss has worked with and supported several educational institutions. Parker Dewey is his self-funded project for unemployed and underemployed recent graduates. In his own words, the big picture is “it’s an opportunity to get experience, make money.” Jeffery’s passion is clearly genuine.

When asking students they didn’t seem entirely convinced.

“It’s a good opportunity for work which is why I’m interested. The point is to get a job, but at least this will let me use my skills to get money,” said Cory Winiecki. “Network building for contacts is what this is good for. Jobs4Hawks doesn’t work. This could be better than finding part-time jobs,” said Agrim Sethi. “It really seems like higher level spam.

It sounded like whatever letter you get in the mail that say we have so many jobs available in your area,” said Reno Waswil.

The grand vision of Parker Dewey hasn’t seemed to inspire its audience. I think it’s a really easy change from something that many are highly skeptical of to one that would provide an excellent opportunity for students looking for employment.

The pitch from Parker Dewey is that through these projects you get the chance to interface with companies and make contacts. Through this hard work, they may love you so much that they will call you back when they have an opening.

My problem with this is that the pitch does not adequately reflect the reality of the situation. Students will be selling themselves as independent contractors to

corporation looking to temporarily boost resources during crunch time. Satisfying the short-term needs of a company does not lead to long-term employment.

If instead Parker Dewey arranged with the companies such that each adequately executed project was guaranteed an interview on site, I would see an amazing connection between industry and new labor. Top companies apply tests to new applicants to gauge their abilities; if these projects are used as such then I think we have a match made in heaven.

Until then, from where I stand there is a disconnect between the stated vision of Parker Dewey, which I believe is genuine, and the process that is supposed to make it a reality.

An Exoticist Theory on the LGBT Movement

Jerry Sha
TECHNEWS WRITER

The emergence of the LGBT movement has been a pretty big deal domestically, and to a lesser extent abroad. Now that the legal and political battles about its morality, implications, and ultimately legality have been mostly concluded, save for a few republican state governors who seem to have missed the Supreme Court memo, I’d like to float a theory on why the movement emerged in our time: the emergence happened because we as a culture got bored.

To understand the basis of the argument requires a short detour to social Darwinism, a subject with many negative connotations but at least a few logically sound working assumptions. Let us, in a little thought experiment, assign to each unique human civilization a value which measures the security, activity, and energy to enact and embrace change in order to better themselves, let’s name this value societal impetus.

Certain cultures seem to have inherently low impetus, and are relatively stable but stagnant. Examples include the indigenous North and South American cultures, especially the Maya and Incas who despite receiving stimulus and competition from neighboring cultures remained relatively stagnant in their own identity and did little more than to paint the region in their own image through military triumph. Examples of surviving low impetus cultures include China and India. Though ancient China was technologically advanced and militarily powerful, and though it was aware of the existence of neighboring cultures

and even the existence of Europe and maybe the Americas, it never sought to project its power and assimilate these neighbors for political or economic gain. Even when it was conquered in the 1800s by now technologically superior western forces, the Chinese tried their best to cling to traditional values as opposed to embracing the new and seemingly more powerful western ones.

High impetus cultures accordingly lead much more vibrant histories. Rome would be the first prime example. As a nation which fueled its entire political and economic structure upon the conquest, subjugation, and integration of new peoples, the Roman empire promised its soldiers and politicians wealth and land, acquired both from military conquest, and in the process of assimilating conquered people, generated more soldiers and politicians, feeding into itself to create one of the largest empires in history. More recently, and of greater note are European powers, who are geographically close packed and fiercely competitive. In the crucible of western Europe, every country seemed willing to do anything, even to forsake and redefine their own identity, in order to get an edge on their neighbors, and through military and economic success reaffirm themselves as the superior culture. Naturally, this was the birthplace of colonialism, nationalism, and imperialism, three factors integral to cultural impetus as we have defined it.

Western society is, as mentioned, decidedly high impetus. The desire to expand our influence and alter the ideals of others in our image is as undoubtably ingrained in the

modern American as the need for military triumph was ingrained in the ancient Roman. Of course this impulse manifests itself in a less extreme way today, but it is still undeniable.

A powerful example of America’s fascination with the exotic is the “turban trick”. During the Jim Crow era of racial oppression, a few clever African Americans discovered that by learning an accent and putting on a turban, they could immediately escape the brunt of racist oppression even in the heart of the deep south. By simply appearing foreign, their identity to the white male went from a stagnant, thoroughly oppressed and inferior class to an exotic, mysterious, and thoroughly exciting foreign dignity, and this garnered them seemingly unthinkable respect, given their attitude towards the prior class.

It is also prudent to note that as a consumer in this nation travel has always been a fixation. Exotic goods and imports have been the driving force behind the era of colonial expansion, and that applies for all Western countries. Though no longer imperialist in the strict sense, America retains a vague but undeniable fascination with the foreign, projected in our interest in tourism, our high consumption of foreign goods and services, our fascination with the exploration of nature on earth and space beyond, and of course our incessant meddling in foreign politics.

There is just one problem: we’ve run out of new cultures to meet.

Every time this nation encountered something new it was at the forefront of the American existence. From the initial contact with the Indians, children were scared with

tales of Indian raiders, while men traded furs for guns and wine to make their livelihoods. Cue the transition to frontierism, and soon after the Monroe Doctrine was established both to keep Europe out, but also to keep the frontier of Central and South America within American grasp.

When we got bored of the Caribbean and traveling back to tour Europe, intercontinental air travel made accessible the ports of Asia. When our economic machine thirsted for the lubricant of new markets, Africa, South America, and the Middle East became resource economies to feed our consumerism.

Our economic machine is pretty much sated now, having expanded to every corner of the globe, but the cultural fascination and desire for the exotic is not. Maybe, just maybe, when America looked inwards towards its domestic issues, it saw in the LGBT movement not only a group of oppressed people, but also a people never before publicly recognized and discussed.

America more than any other country owes its success to frontierism, and members of the LGBT community are the new cultural frontier. Unfortunately, America has historically sought out new frontiers for only one purpose, to amuse, enrich, and advance its own interests, often at the frontier’s expense, and to eventually incorporate a small degree of that frontier we find agreeable into our own culture. It is simply yet to be determined how this latest exotic new wave will break against the shoals of American progress.

Illinois Tech Robotics Hosts FIRST Robotics Competition Kickoff

Kori Bowns
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

For over a decade, Illinois Tech Robotics (ITR) has been supporting the endeavors of youth Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education through many partnerships with FIRST Robotics. FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology). On January 9, 2016, ITR’s students returned to campus early to put on the Chicagoland FIRST Robotics Competition kickoff event.

The FIRST Robotics Competition was founded in 1992 and is an international high school robotics competition where teams of students and mentors work during

a six-week build season period to build robots weighing up to 150 pounds that play in a competitive challenge that changes every year. These competitions culminate in a world championship held in St. Louis, but they begin with local kickoff events held simultaneously around the world in early January each year.

At kickoff events, teams from the local area come together and watch a live broadcast that reveals the challenge for which teams will have to build their robots. As the live broadcast concludes, teams of students receive the set of rules for their challenge as well as a kit of parts that contains components that they will find useful when building their robot. Many kickoff events also hold workshops that allow teams to meet, exchange ideas, or learn

new skills that will help their team succeed.

The Chicagoland kickoff hosted by Illinois Tech Robotics in Hermann Hall welcomed more than 300 students as well as their mentors, parents, and supporters. Illinois Tech Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs Frances Bronet opened the event with a speech to the students in attendance. After the broadcast concluded, students from Illinois Tech Robotics helped teams receive and inventory their kit of parts, review rules for the competition, lean programming techniques, and discover effective fundraising ideas.

The event was possible thanks to months of preparation on behalf of Illinois Tech Robotics members as well as the help

of dozens of volunteers on the day of the event. The Chicagoland kickoff is just the first of many volunteer events that Illinois Tech Robotics will be involved with this semester, including working as key volunteers at the Midwest Regional FIRST Robotics Competition at University of Illinois at Chicago, and volunteering at the FIRST World Championship event.

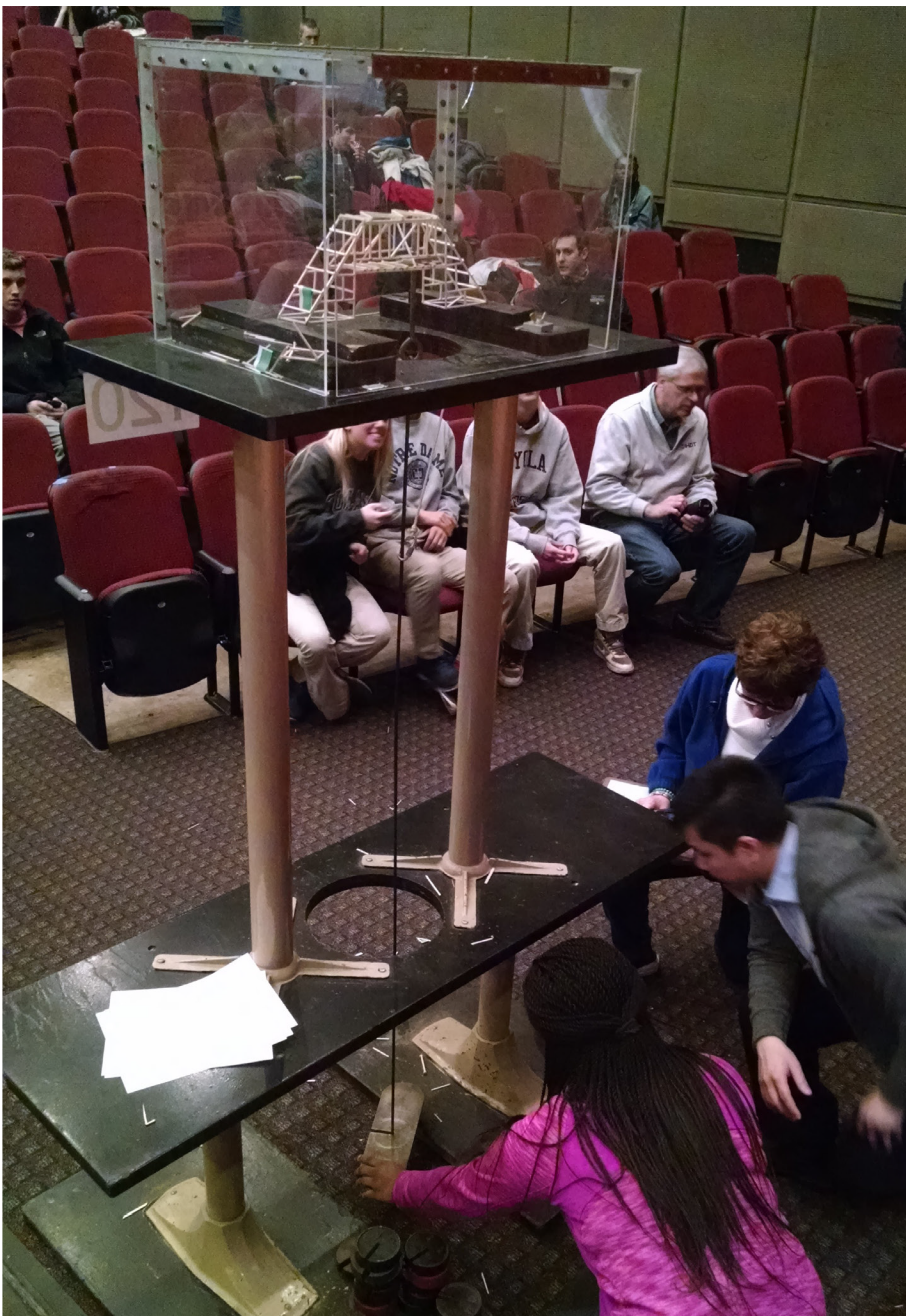
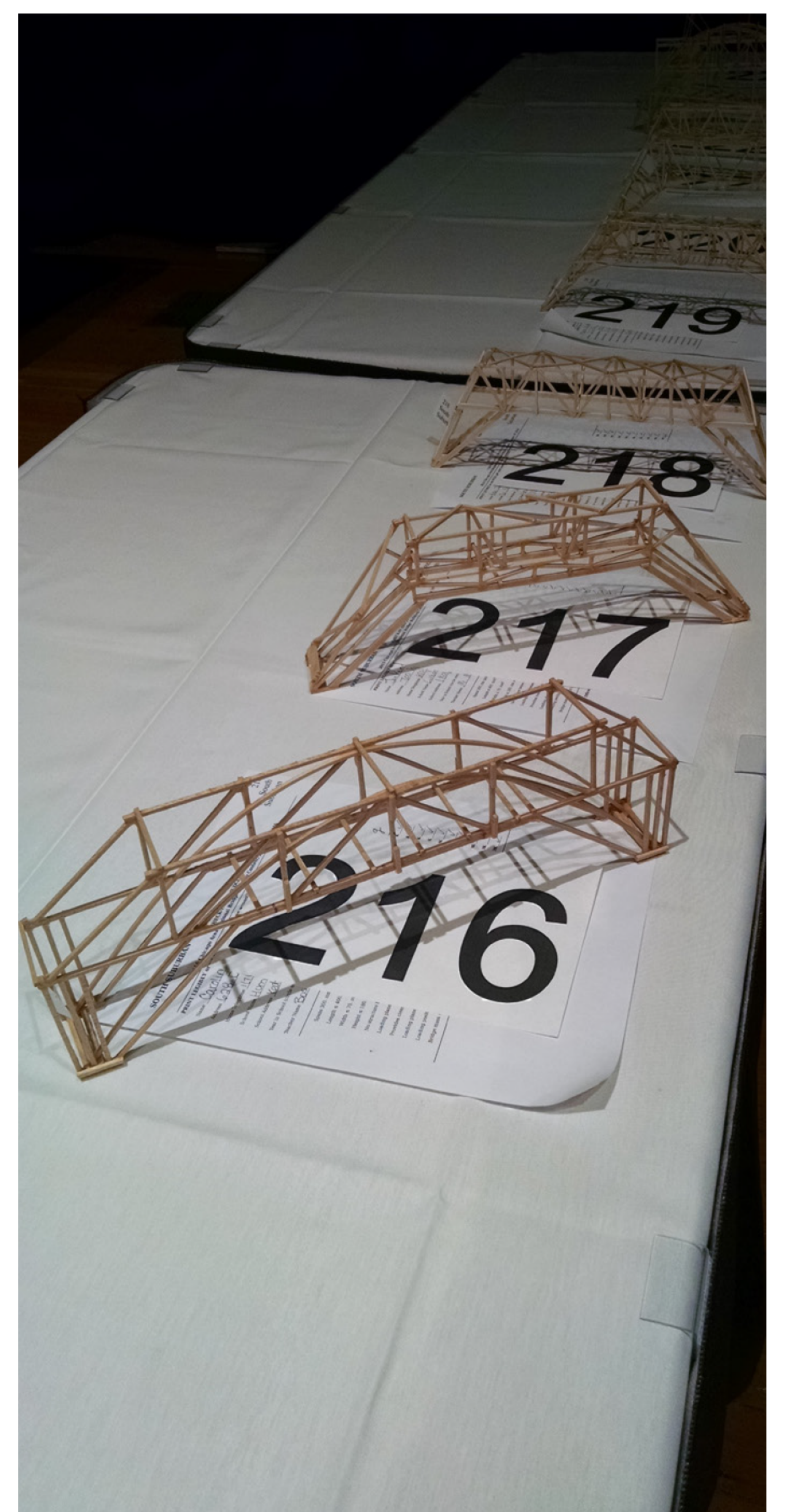
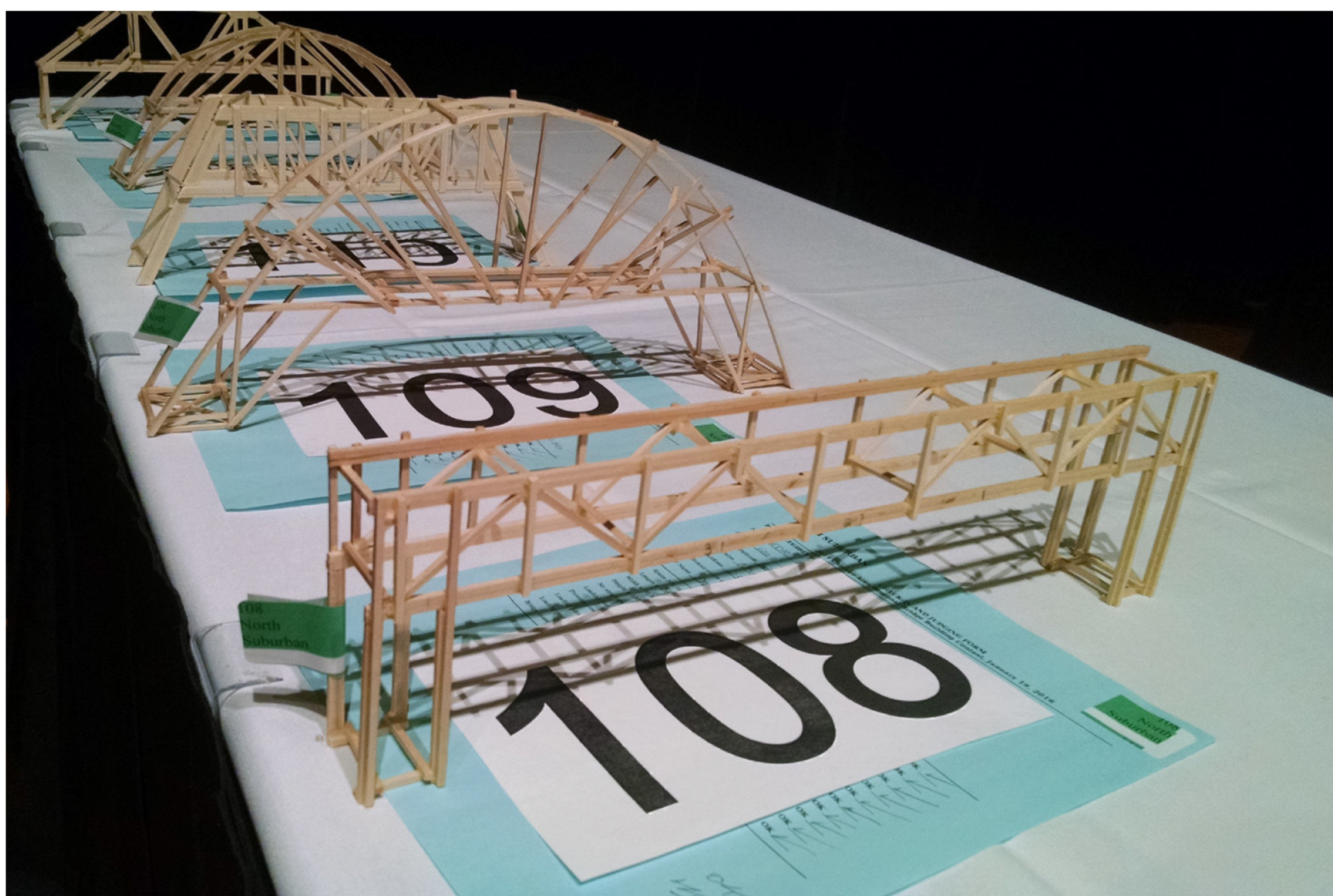
Those interested in volunteering their time with FIRST or otherwise getting involved with Illinois Tech Robotics can contact the organization at robotics.iit@gmail.com, join the organization on HawkLink, or join weekly meetings held Friday evenings at 7pm in their robotics lab in 3424 S. State Street.

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Illinois Tech hosts 2016 Chicago Regional Bridge Contest for high school students



Visibility, safety town hall discussed at SGA Senate meeting

Genevieve Hummel
TECHNEWS WRITER

The Student Government Association (SGA) held its first Senate meeting of the semester on Wednesday, January 20. The meeting began with presentation by groups seeking approval to become official student organizations on campus. One new student organization, "Science Graduate Student Association" received approval at this meeting. This organization was created to provide a professional organization for graduate students on campus that would offer resources and opportunities that focus on helping graduate

students.

These presentations were followed by the President's and Vice Presidents' reports. The results of the Student Speak Survey revealed that students have noticed SGA's attempt to become more visible on campus. However, SGA still would like to increase their visibility on campus, including better advertising for open senate seats. For example, there is now an opening for a College of Architecture senate spot.

Many students are not aware that Illinois Tech offers a free "student discount card" that provides discounts to local places on and off campus. This card can be picked

up in the Office of Campus Life (OCL) and is free for all Illinois Tech students. The list of places where the card can be used can be found online. The Vice President of Academic Affairs at SGA is hoping to increase the number of vendors offering discounts through this card.

The Communications Committees service project was a huge success last semester, providing toys and small gifts to children from local elementary schools. The Vice President of Student Life reported that the second Town Hall will be held on February 8 from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the MTCC Welcome Center and will focus on the topic of safety on campus.

All Student Government

Association meetings are open meetings and SGA would like to encourage all students to attend senate meetings. Meetings are held every other Wednesday night beginning at 9:15 p.m.. Meetings will now be held in Stuart Building room 113. The Student Government has an open door policy for meetings, where students may come and go as they please and students can participate in any discussions. SGA meetings are a great way to become more involved on campus. The next senate hearing will be held on Wednesday, February 3 and all students are invited, and encouraged to attend.

WTT 88.9

Reviews:

Marble Mouth releases promising indie pop album

Soren Spicknall
WIIT STATION MANAGER

Scott Reitherman is no stranger to the indie pop community. As frontman of Throw Me The Statue until that group's departure in 2013, he's already become a familiar face in his native Seattle and beyond, scoring a minor college radio hit with that band's song "Lolita" in 2009. The success of the album Creaturesque earned Throw Me The Statue live session appearances on KEXP, Daytrotter, and more while touring, but the end of the group threatened to put an early cap on Reitherman's promising musical career. But instead of losing energy without a formal lineup behind him, Reitherman has instead cloaked himself in the shroud of a new name and a retro-futuristic new sound: Pillar Point. The first sign of a departure from TMTS's signature guitar pop came with Reitherman's move from Secretly Canadian to Polyvinyl Records in 2014, which was followed quickly with the release of Pillar Point's self-titled debut album, an upfront look at internal conflict drenched in layer upon layer of synthesizers and drum machines. And now, returning to perfect that formula, Pillar Point is back with their sophomore effort, Marble Mouth, which dropped on the 22nd.

Cynics may point to the rise of dance pop groups like Glass Animals and Sylvan Esso in recent years, and dismiss Pillar Point's music as a simple market grab rather than a genuine effort by Reitherman to expand his musical horizons. Those cynics would be wrong. Marble Mouth is one of the most painstakingly constructed albums I've heard yet in the genre, and

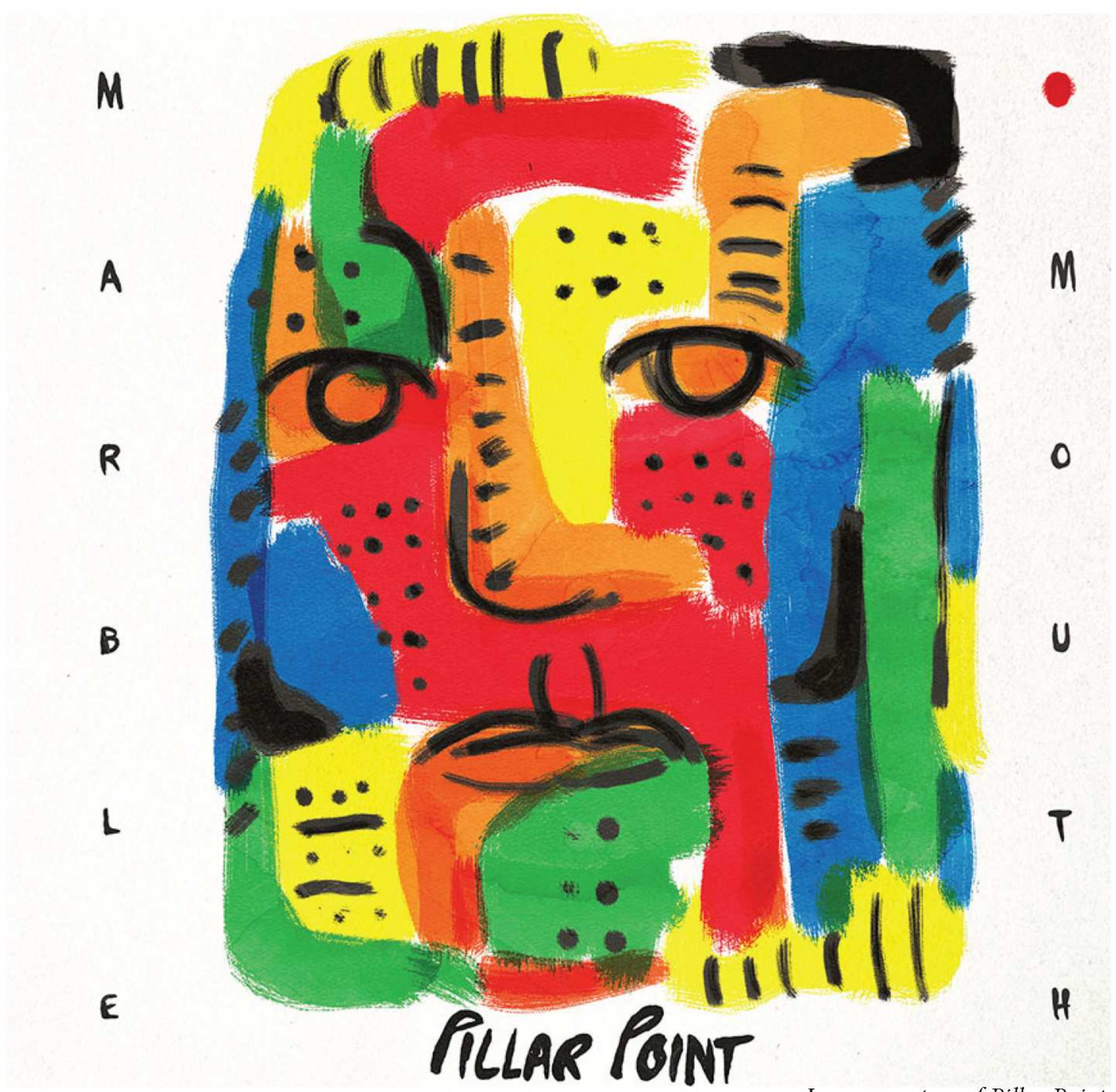


Image courtesy of Pillar Point

is certainly the most complex work of Reitherman's career. The musician traveled to Athens, Georgia to record in the studio owned by of Montreal's Kevin Barnes, a process that took

a month to complete. After that, more recordings were made in New Orleans, another six full weeks of work. The result is a kaleidoscope of grooving, rhythmic electropop with backing

contributions from members of Kishi Bashi and Washed Out, matching the concentration of works by Sun Airway and Animal Collective with the danceability of Jamie xx or LCD Soundsystem. At times the album has small signs of Kevin Barnes influence (most obvious on the Athens-themed track "Lafayette", which includes Barnes' unmistakable voice layered over itself as backing vocals), but Pillar Point's general vibe is all its own.

Upon first listen, it might be easy to call Marble Mouth a "retro" pop work based on the sheer number of New Wave synth tones found inside. However, the warm and sunny production style of the album betrays its modern nature, a product of the 25 years passed since such tones were last considered purely dramatic tools. Additionally, Reitherman's vocals are mixed in a different fashion than they ever were on TMTS's LPs, taking on a similar R&B-influenced sheen to Twin Shadow's first two albums. Pillar Point is an act much more suited to today's independent music climate than any continuation of TMTS would have been, and Marble Mouth will likely be considered Reitherman's most significant work to date within the next two years. That said, it's important to note that Pillar Point is not an utter departure from Reitherman's roots with TMTS. Perhaps an intentional nod to his past, the final song on this new album is a guitar and organ-driven affair, a signal that Pillar Point does not exist in a vacuum away from Reitherman's history. It's a stellar song in its own right, too, and proof that after all the electronics are peeled away, the man's songwriting prowess still stands on its own. 8.7/10

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'The Revenant' gains critical acclaim, 12 Oscar nominations

Austin Gonzalez

OPINION EDITOR

"The Revenant" is a great story adaptation that has a lot to offer as a film, but is it deserving of its 12 nominations for the 88th Oscars?

In this movie, we follow a group of fur trappers in 1823. After a disastrous raid by Native Americans, the survivors of the camp are forced to flee in to wilderness. Hugh Glass (Leonardo DiCaprio) is a guide who means to lead what remains of the group back to a frontier fort. While scouting ahead alone, Hugh Glass is mauled by a bear in one of the most gripping and overwhelming scenes in the movie. His compatriots do their best mend his numerous gaping wounds, but ultimately are forced to abandon him. Glass faces only sorrow and hardship from then on. What follows is the harrowing tale of the man who died and came back, The Revenant.

The story is truly gripping and overwhelming at times, but what has this 135 million dollar picture done to deserve nominations for Leading Role, Director, Cinematography, and ultimately Best Picture?

DiCaprio shows his excellence in his craft once again with this movie. What are otherwise rather flat and one dimensional characters are made endearing through superb performances by both DiCaprio and Hardy.

I think their performance was helped by director Inarritu's decision to shoot entirely on-location. The entire movie is shot using only the natural light available, making for a challenging and limited conditions on set. As far as cinematography is concerned, someone certainly carefully crafted the experience for the viewer. Imagine a shot of a mountain overlaid with the belabored breath of the protagonist; with each breath, the clouds grow around the peak. This is followed by a

match cut of wisp of smoke trailing off a pipe of a separate group. It's difficult to call Best Picture in any year, but The Revenant has a lot going for it.

If Revenant wins all 12 nominations, it will set a new record. The current top Oscar movies of all time are "Ben-Hur," "The Titanic," and "Lord of the Rings: Return of the King," which all tie with 11 Oscars each.

By all counts, "The Revenant" is a good movie that makes great use of the medium of film to create a work of art. This is one of the few movies, in our spectacle driven world, that I left without complaint.



Image courtesy of collider.com

Motorola opens new store in Block 37



Photos by Kori Bowns

SUDOKU

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数独

The word Sudoku, above, is actually the abbreviation of “Suuji wa dokushin ni kagiru,” meaning “the digits must be single” or “the digits are limited to one occurrence.”



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sports@technewsit.com

SPORTS



Tuesday, January 26
Women’s Basketball
vs. Moody Bible
7 p.m.

Men’s Basketball
vs. Moody Bible
7 p.m.

Friday, January 29
Men’s Volleyball
@ CCSJ
12 p.m.

Men’s Volleyball
@ Cincinnati Christian
2 p.m.

Saturday, January 30
Swimming and Diving
@ Wheaton Quad
11 a.m.

Track and Field
vs. Somers, Wis.
10 a.m.

Men’s Volleyball
@ Loras
2 p.m.

Men’s Volleyball
@ Briar Cliff
6 p.m.

Tuesday, February 2
Men’s Basketball
vs. Saint Mary’s
7 p.m.

THE WEATHER
City and State—Rain,
Snow, Colder
(Details in Daily Almanac)

VOLUME 97 — No. 161

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Obama Sweeps to Historic Victory

Nation Elects Its First African-American President Amid Record Turnout; Turmoil in Economy Dominates Voters' Concerns

By JONATHAN WEISMAN
AND LAURA MECKLER

WASHINGTON—Sen. Barack Obama