

Students excel in robotics

Archdiocese of Baltimore students are ushering in the age of the robot.

Five members of Mount St. Joseph High School's robotics class won the Maryland State Championship.

Bryan Von Hagel, Alex Buckler, Brandon Smith-Saxon, Morgan Brown and Maxwell Andrew finished in first place at the U.S. Naval Academy's Underwater Robotic Challenge the weekend of April 30 and May 1. They beat 96 other Maryland teams to advance to the National Championship at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

The students were in third place after the preliminary speed trials and advanced to the "cap the well" state championship where they were pitted against eight other Maryland schools. In the simulated oil spill, the Mount St. Joseph students had to pick up the well cap of a simulated leaking oil well eight feet under the water, and maneuver it onto the well. The lid had to stay on the well so that the well stayed "capped".

Von Hagel piloted the team to an overall first place time of 1 minute, 44 seconds, beating the second place team by almost a complete minute.

Calvert Hall College High School junior Patrick McQuay, a junior at Calvert Hall and member of the Carroll County 4H Club's Sonic Super Sparks, recently attended the VEX Robotics World Championship, a gathering of top robotics teams from around the world at Disney World in Orlando, Fla.

The 2011 VEX Robotics World Championship included top teams from over 200 VEX Robotics Competition tournaments in cities around the world from May 2010 to March 2011. McQuay's team was one of over 400 high school teams who received invitations and won the Teamwork Award and the Excellence Award in their division. The Excellence Award is the highest award presented at VEX Robotics Competition and is given to a team that exemplifies overall excellence in building a well-rounded VEX robotics program.

St. John the Evangelist School in Severna Park had faculty collaborate with Naval

Academy professor Angela Moran in January. The project introduced middle school students to the concepts of Naval engineering and architecture through a marine robotics program.