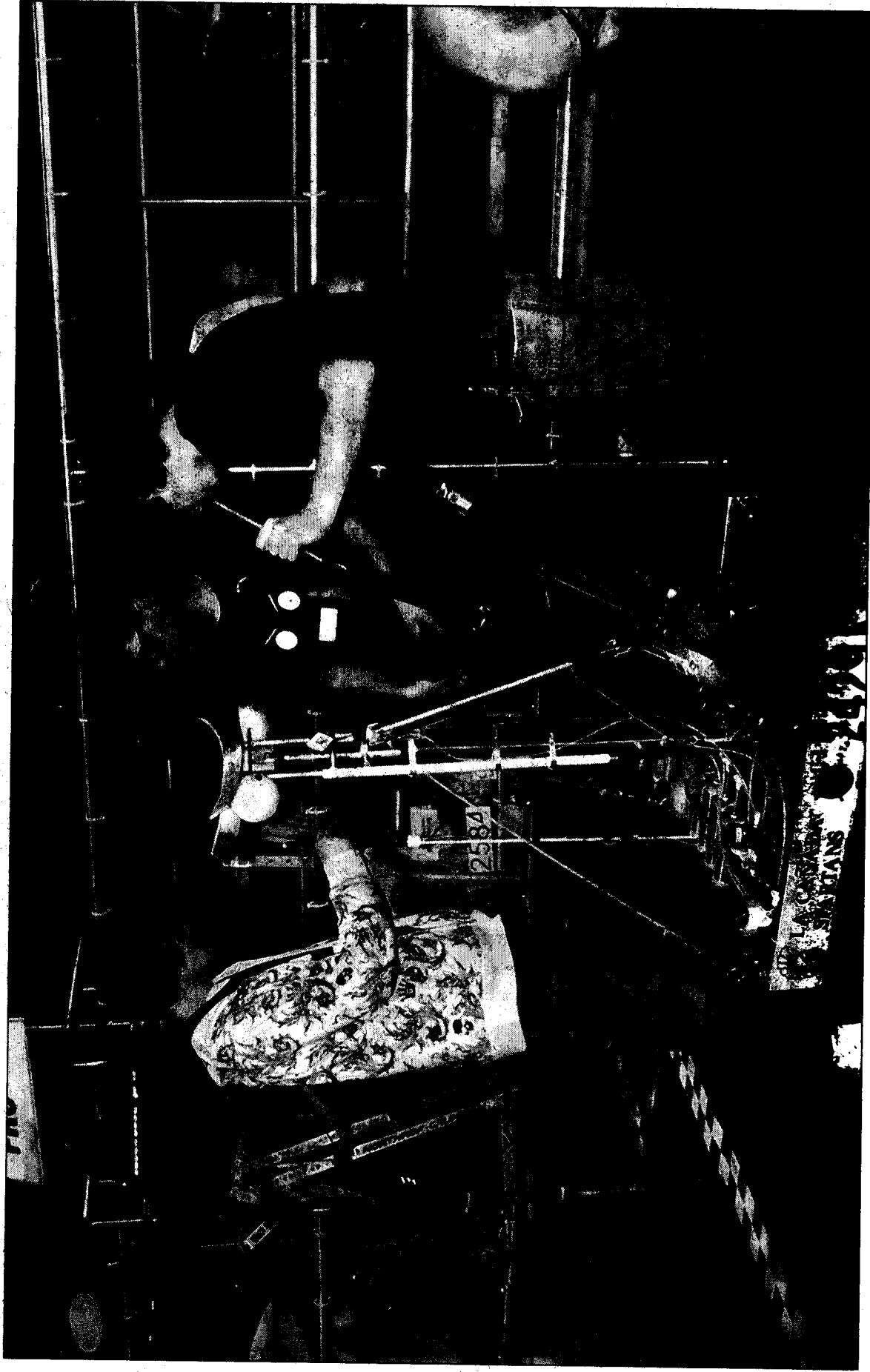


ALL THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2008

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SCHOOLS



La Cañada High School Engineering Club members examine their robot after ending a successful round on the playing field at the FIRST competition held over the weekend.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARY O'KEEFE/VALLEY SUN

FIRST time at robotics competition

BY MARY O'KEEFE
VALLEY SUN

neering Club won the "All Star Rookie" award and has been invited to compete at the national competition in Atlanta, GA in April.

In their first ever venture into the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) competition, the La Cañada High School Engi-

Fifty-two teams competed over the weekend at the Los Angeles Sports Arena. FIRST

competition had robots designed, built and controlled by the students competing in a game that was part soccer, part NASCAR. Each year the FIRST program challenges high school teams to build a robot that can play a specifically designed game. This year a robot had to race around a tennis-court size track. In each 2 minute 15 second round, robots scored points by pushing and passing rubber balls called "trackballs" around the field and over a six-and-a-half foot overpass. Robots had to operate by themselves for the first 15 seconds of each round. Students started the robots with a television-type remote control. After the 15 seconds, the students were allowed to control the robots with the use of a control panel.

La Cañada High School's Engineering Club, which built the robot that competed, is made up of about 25 members with a strong core unit of 10 to 12 students.

"Because we all have so much going on, it's difficult for all the members to be at every meeting," said David Goldstein,

a high school junior and member of the club.

The La Cañada robot performed well with only a few problems.

"A couple of things needed to be fine tuned," Goldstein said. "But we learned with each round."

The La Cañada students took advantage of everything the competition had to offer. Team members visited all the other school booths and spoke to them not only about their robot but also about the competition itself. Club members Robert

Shuman and Morgan Rygg collected buttons and beads as they scouted out other teams; each booth hands out tickets representing their school.

"The point of scouting is to find out about other teams. Everyone has been so helpful," Shuman said.

"This gracious professionalism that everyone talks about her is true," Rygg said.

The club won its last round. "We ended on a strong note," said Steve Zimmerman, the club's teacher/mentor. "I am very proud of our work."



Members of the LCHS Engineering Club, from left, Morgan Rygg and Robert Shuman collected souvenir buttons and beads from fellow robotic teams at the FIRST competition.



Members of the La Cañada High School Engineering Club pose with their robot just before entering the competition field.