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among young people.

Saturday's event was the State Championship with the top team advancing to the World Festival in St. Louis in late April.

With a theme of "Body Forward," teams of students ages 9 to 14 explored the cutting-edge world of biomedical engineering to discover innovative ways to repair injuries, overcome genetic predispositions and maximize the body's potential, with the purpose of leading happier, healthier lives.

Prior to Saturday, 337 teams competed in 12 qualifiers and three Super Regional contests, involving a total of 2,500 students. Using the qualifiers as an elimination process, the field was narrowed to the 50 teams that took part in the state tournament on Saturday at Georgia Tech.

The Kick 'N' Bots, a group of five extraordinary TCMS students took their project to the next level at the state championships.

After Saturday's contest Michael Austin, Danielle Diehl, Gabe Gilliland, Mia Manto and Sunshine Wood, the TCMS Robotics team, took home the satisfaction of competing in Georgia FIRST LEGO League Robotics state tournament.

Early on in their quest, the Bots' robotics coach, Jo Ray Van Vliet, provided them with professional guidance and encouragement to lead the team to their first state championship event.

Their project was unique. The team used a Google Inventor Application program to develop a communication device in concept to aid Alzheimer's patients.

The device would help Alzheimer's patients when they look at their telephone, giving them the date, advising them of their day's schedule and even provide GPS support.

It also includes telephone numbers of people they may need to contact, in-

cluding pictures of the people beside the numbers. When they click on the person's picture, it gives the Alzheimer's patient information about who the person is and their contact information.

The robotic concept the team developed was operated on a course designed to mimic parts of the human body and had to be built and programmed by the team to complete as many of the 14 specific tasks as it could in less than two and a half minutes in order to score points.

"Last summer when Jo Ray Van Vliet sent me an e-mail and wanted to bring this program to the school, we got excited about it," Principal Berrong said. "We thought it was something that we could build on.

"We had no expectations of winning anything; we thought if we got to go and compete it would be good for the kids," he said. "What they've done this year is truly impressive."

Warden graduates advanced training

Army Pvt. Jerrid K. Warden has graduated from the Direct Fire Infantryman One Station Unit Training at Fort Benning, Columbus, Ga. The training consists of Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training.

During the nine weeks of Basic Combat Training, the soldier received training in drill and ceremonies, weapons, map reading, tactics, military courtesy, military justice, physical fitness,

first aid, and Army history, core values and traditions. Additional training included development of basic combat skills and battlefield operations and tactics, and experiencing use of various weapons and weapons defenses available to the infantry crewman.

The Advanced Individual Training course is designed to train indirect fire infantry soldiers to employ, fire and recover anti-personnel and anti-

tank mines; locate, neutralize and extract mines; map reading and ground navigation; operate and maintain communications equipment and radio networks; construct and camouflage mortar firing positions; operate and maintain mortars and fire control equipment for individual/crew served weapons firing positions.

The private is a 2010 graduate of Union County High School, Blairsville, GA.



Jo Ray Van Vliet, Sunshine Wood, Mia Manto, Michael Austin and TCMS Principal Darren Berrong pose during the LEGO League Robotics tournament in Atlanta on Saturday. Photo/James Reese

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Jail to sign up to vote if you're not registered.

Early ballots can be cast at the Board of Elections and Registration as early as Feb. 21 at 91 Berrong Street in Hiawassee.

If approved, the SPLOST would last no longer than six years. It is estimated to raise \$12.7 million to fund capital outlay projects in the county and the cities of Hiawassee and Young Harris.

County projects comprise parks and recreation improvements that include acquisition, construction and equipping a multi-purpose recreational and community building. It also includes money for roads and bridges improvements and may include pedestrian cross

walks, parking and capital equipment.

Fire Department improvements also are on the list of capital outlay projects to include vehicles, equipment facilities and fire hydrants.

Other projects include construction and improvements at public libraries, water and sewer improvements, including solid waste, storm water management and accompanying equipment.

Public safety vehicles and equipment including ambulances also are on the list of capital projects. The SPLOST also includes funds for industrial and economic development.

The city of Hiawassee intends to use its share of SPLOST funds on parks and recreation improvements, a facelift for the

Downtown Square, economic development, roads, streets and bridges, which could include sidewalks, a bicycle path, pedestrian cross walks and turn lanes.

Projects also include fire hydrants and improved fire protection facilities and water lines and accompanying equipment.

Projects for the city of Young Harris include parks and recreation improvements, road, streets and bridge improvements. Those improvements could include sidewalks, bicycle paths, pedestrian cross walks and capital equipment. The city of Young Harris also plans water and sewer improvements including fire hydrants, solid waste, storm water management and equipment.

Monthly meeting of Arts and Crafts Guild

The monthly meeting of the Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild Inc. will be held Tuesday, February 8, 2011, at 6 p.m. social time and at 6:30 p.m. for the formal agenda. The meeting will be held at the Guild's ArtWorks store located in the retail strip above the Holiday Inn Express in downtown Hiawassee, 308 Big Sky Drive. Light refreshments are available from 6 to 6:30 p.m.

The February meeting's main speaker after a brief business agenda, will be Guild

member Bert Schafer, who will share information about his painting process on wood that looks just like fabric or a quilt!

The Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild Inc. is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1988 to promote and encourage arts and crafts in the region. The Guild has over 70 members, many of whom also teach classes and sell their hand-made items in the retail outlet called ArtWorks Artisan Centre, which opened in 2006. Please see the website at www.mtnregartscraftsguild.org for more information.

For other information please contact Bonny Herman, Publicity Committee Chair, at 706-379-0944 or via email at bon3bon@windstream.net. RSVPs are not necessary.

Lions Club Give-A-Christmas party



Kneeling: Diana Annast, Michael Annast. Back Row, L-R: Leonard McConnell, Katie Polstra, Bud Parker, Glenda Parker, Santa, Julie Payne, Janice Smith, Ruth McConnell and Allen Saylor.

The Towns County Lions Club held its annual Give-A-Christmas Party on December 12, 2010 at the Anderson Music Hall. Many children and their families braved the snow and cold to attend the party. Everyone had a good time with the

children receiving gifts, snacks and a visit with Santa. Since Santa had to leave the elves behind to tend to last-minute issues, he was assisted by members and spouses of the Towns County Lions Club, some of whom are pictured. T(Feb.2.F2)SH