UVic Engineers Triumphant at WEC

This story begins not but a week ago when 26 delegates arrived at the Victoria airport early in the morning, too excited to be tired. Those of us who had attended WEC in the past were filled with expectations, and those who hadn't, with hope. For those unfamiliar, the Western Engineering Competition is an annual event held at any university located west of Ontario. Over 200 delegates from 10 schools compete in one of 6 competitions. It is always informative, competitive, and, like most engineering events, involves thorough celebration.

The first evening in ‘beautiful’ Saskatoon was spent at a local sports bar. The best part about WEC is consistently overloading bars with rowdy engineers, and this night was no exception. As with any night at a sports bar, we enjoyed numerous fermented beverages while watching.... (Continued on Page 2)

ESS Presents Dodgeball
Monday February 7th, 9:00pm at the Cinecenta

The ESS is proud to present ‘Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story’. Tickets are just $5. and include the movie, popcorn and pop! What could be better? Any students, or friends of students are invited. Tickets are available in the ESS, or at the door, while quantities last. Any questions should be directed to essb-eve@engr.uvic.ca

Engineering Girls Night
What: 1680 Teakwood Road
Where: 4pm, Friday January 4th
Cost: Free
Start at 1680 Teakwood Road for pizza. Billiards at Peacocks at 7pm. Other activities to follow. See Facebook event for more details.
WEC Recap Continued

... sports, playing foosball, and repeatedly scratching the eight-ball in pool. We met dozens of new people and reminded ourselves how awesome UVic students are, especially those we socialize with less frequently. As an added bonus, the Canucks won with Lee Sweatt scoring the winner (no, we don’t know who Lee Sweatt is either). Sportsbar night was my favourite night.

Next evening, after some wine and not so much cheese, we found ourselves on a bus to the billiards hall. At billiards, the UVic team showed it was close (and liquored) enough to start the singing. If you thought you’d seen singing at UVic, you would check out WEC: it’s an art, and the fat guys are Picassos. At the pool hall a billiards tournament broke out, along with the odd game of coasters. For those of you who don’t know, your President (Jason Jubinville) and ex-Director of Events (Rob Bellrose) are pool sharks: the pair went undefeated in the tournament only to pull a Vancouver Canucks, and lose in the finals to an admittedly very skilled team from the U of S. The night came to a close with a certain second year taking too much advantage of the 3 dollar drafts, multiple parades and chants without pants on, and even more scratches to the eight ball. Pool night was my favourite night.

The next day, after more scones for breakfast, was competition day! We got all went into our briefings at 7:30am and discovered our challenges. The details would be too long to go into detail but it is sufficient to say: they were challenges. The design and build portion (and even the presentations for Junior Design) were concluded by 5pm. Some of us had a presentation the following day, but those who did not took different approach to the evening. Everyone went for dinner and an improv show (to which I was skeptical, but proved hilarious (thanks Tom for singing the majority of the Pokemon song by yourself to the entire population)). The dinner and improv was followed by a variety of experiences.

Those with competition to complete the next day wisely chose to take advantage of the evening for preparation, those without stayed for the most epic games of quarters ever (picture 6 military tables, 10 ‘geers to a table, yelling hysterics and enough flying currency to make the a hobo cry)! Better yet, some (okay, maybe just three of us), went out to a different bar afterwards and stayed until closing. Improv and quarters night was my favourite night.

The next day we shook off our headaches and received an actual breakfast with, like, eggs and stuff in it! The presentations from at least three of WEC’s senior teams we given in a partial gravel monotone, and we headed to the banquet, where we were more than delighted to have the Stream A Jr. Design team crowned champions and the Stream B Sr. Design team place second (seriously, these guys kicked ass, and are now headed to CEC in Montreal to compete nationally). As an added bonus the collective UVic team won the spirit award. Which means one thing: we know how to have a good time! Later that night was Rubiks Cube Night at the “Scuz”. We came prepared with 6 different colours of clothing, which we traded at random with other ‘geers at the bar with the intention of ending the night wearing all one colour. Most of use started off looking okay, but quickly then found ourselves wearing girls tank tops and booty shorts and odd pyjamas. I know that sounds exciting, but I think I got the tank top from a dude... I know... weird... Eventually we found ourselves back at the hotel. This author did so at 5am in an elevator next to a gentlemen wearing a carpet (hmmm...). Rubiks Cube Night was my favourite night!

All in all, WEC was another success. I wouldn’t hesitate to tell any of you to try your best to head qualify for Calgary in 2012, which will be another week worth living twice. Best of luck to our CEC teams!

-N. Syrotuck, J. Grove
So You Think You’re Drunk?

Research shows that your drunkenness is not purely alcohol’s fault. You act drunk just by knowing you are drinking alcohol.

This is not a new finding; psychologists since the forties have been conducting research on alcohol’s effects. Aggressiveness, memory, comprehension, balance and even driving skills are affected if you believe you are drinking alcohol. You do not need to actually consume alcohol; simply believing that you did will be enough to compromise your behaviour.

In an published by BBC News: Science & Environment, this topic was discussed. Seema Assefi and Maryanne Garry, psychologists at Victoria University, New Zealand, claim that an individual’s memory can be affected by an alcohol placebo. The study consisted of 148 students who were split into two groups, a control group drinking tonic and a placebo group under the impression that they were drinking vodka and tonic, when it was tonic only. The research was carried out in a bar-like environment, with bartenders, vodka bottles, tonic bottles and glasses. After the “party” was over, the students were shown slides about a crime that contained misleading information, and then there were asked about it. Compared to the control group, the placebo group did dramatically worse answering the questions, and the placebo group showed physical signs of intoxication.

Another study conducted in Maastricht University, Netherlands, concerning driving while intoxicated showed similar results. The placebo group preformed badly compared to the control group, exhibiting signs of physical intoxication as before. The study also examined the effects that believing

that one is under the influence of marijuana have on driving. Individuals in the that study’s placebo group performed poorly (i.e. drove worse) when they believed they had used marijuana compared to the control group. However, compared to the drivers who were actually drunk or high, the placebo groups did perform better, but not by much.

A study on drunken subjects’ aggressive behaviour presents similar results. This study is old (1990) and was conducted at the University of Missouri, Columbia. The placebo individuals showed more aggressive signs when provoked compared to the control group. Again, the placebo group was somewhat less aggressive than the group that was actually drunk.

These studies prove that major behavioural effects occur when an individual is convinced he or she is drinking alcohol. Chemically, it is true that alcohol affects your brain, hindering your motor skills, response time and orientation the most while affecting the limbic system (which is associated with emotions) in your brain and frontal lobe (which controls decision making) less. These studies don’t discount the chemical effects of alcohol, but they do show that the psychological effects of believing one had ingested alcohol are greater, and these are what drives an individual’s actions.

In conclusion, current studies’ results are strong enough to suggest that drunkenness is “mainly” just a state of your mind.

F. Hamood
Be warned if you haven’t seen Inception yet - this article contains many spoilers.

So what does this wildly popular film have to do with engineering design? The idea occurred to me when I made a curious connection during my second viewing: It’s the beginning of the film and Saito, the rich victim of Cobbs’ dream-napping, has just fallen to the floor in what he thinks is his apartment. But lying on the tacky, polyester carpet makes the powerful businessman realize that the floor must be (along with the rest of his surroundings), fake; his real apartment has wool carpet.

The greasy-haired “dream architect” reminded me of myself – not because of any shared distaste for showering, but because when given the task of artificially recreating something, he failed to notice one detail: the carpet. The same thing happened to me on my first co-op term, sort of. I was using 3D-modeling software to make drawings of unlogged industrial equipment so it could be checked for safety, but every time I thought I understood an object well enough to recreate it on a computer, I was unable to recall certain details. This resulted in many information-gathering trips to the industrial yard.

Modeling a piece of sheet metal equipment is hard enough – I can’t imagine modeling an entire world. Yet, that’s what Cobb and Mal disastrously tried to do, providing the undercurrent and climax of Inception’s whole conflict. They created their own dream-world, a world that was uninformed by the realities and limitations imposed by physics, space, economics, human needs and opposing opinions. Challenges are needed for imagination to flow. Because their ideas were uncontested, their imaginations were stagnant.

To be impressive, engineering designs need to overcome challenges and succeed despite their constraints. That’s why houses that are built in challenging environments are the most amazing. It’s why the best designs come from interdisciplinary teams. It’s why GM engineers, when first given the hypothetical task of designing a car that would sit on a plain skateboard-like platform powered by a compact fuel cell, drew a blank; they didn’t have anything to work with – there were no constraints.

A good design is a logical and brilliant solution to a real set of financial, physical, manufacturing and environmental limits. To be relevant, imagination needs to be informed by reality. Otherwise, our most ambitious designs will remain nothing more than dreams.

- E. Kyfiuk

“Engineering design things, like bridges that kill people.” - M. McWilliams, Mech 345

“Lawsuits are funny things…. …. they’re not really a big deal.” - Dr. Dechev, Mech 350

“Any time you see elephant next to mouse…. ignore mouse!” - Dr. Zielinski, Elec 330

“I don’t want to talk about anything that might be useful.” - J. Tatum, Phys 216
For those of you who were wondering why there was nobody playing on Hockey Night in Canada Saturday night, the best players in the league had assembled in Raleigh, North Carolina for the All-Star Weekend.

This year’s weekend featured a whole bunch of firsts. It was the first all-star game not played in the traditional East vs. West style, but instead a fantasy draft style where two captains would draft the remaining all stars one by one. Cam Ward became the first person to be a first pick in the draft, and if the Leafs weren’t pathetic enough already, their only star at the festivities, Phil Kessel, became the first person to be picked last in the draft. For the first time ever, the Sedins were pitted against each other when they were taken by opposite teams, one after another. Interesting note: Daniel was taken ahead of Henrik again (that’s 2-0 for those of you keeping score).

With Crosby not taking part due to injury the weekend was allowed to focus on more than one player. The skills competition went as usual. Zdeno Chara kept his reign as the hardest shooter, Corey Perry showed off some cool looking, but otherwise useless “lacrosse” style puck skills, nobody came close to Mike Gartner’s fastest lap record and Alex Ovechkin continued to act like a child.

On Sunday, the main event took place. With a final score of 11-10, the night featured an overabundance of unnecessary passing, lack of hitting and a focus of 100% of your energy on offense. In other words it was just a regular night for Mike Green.

I suppose the most interesting thing to note was Jeff Skinner, hometown favourite, became the youngest player to ever play in a major professional sports all-star game, and in the process became more popular than Justin Bieber in Raleigh. I understand why the crowd gave him the loudest applause.

-R. Petty
The common engineering stereotype is that of a solitary person; one who isn’t all that good in social situations and feels more comfortable working with numbers than people. I find this at odds with the other common stereotype of engineering students as beer drinking party. How is it that engineers can carry the stigma of excessive drinking and socializing while at the same time being socially awkward? I spent my first week of January, as I have every year of my undergraduate degree, at the Canadian Federation of Engineering Students annual Congress. This even brings around 200 of the country’s finest engineering students from coast to coast. The first thing you will notice at these events is that we don’t look like engineers; we look like every other student you know. Our jokes however do contain more triple integrals than the arts students. This past year was held on the east coast, in St. John’s NL. If you are free next year and want to meet some of the most amazing people you will ever meet, come by Whitehorse in 2012.

I have been very lucky to be a part of the CFES; it’s rare to be in a place with so much talent and inspiring people. When you put so many intelligent people in close proximity to each other you truly understand what it means to be a free thinker. You have to open your mind when chances are that the person next to you knows more than you do. At these engineering meetings, everyone is there to learn, everyone is on the same playing field, everyone wants to be there, and everyone contributes in some form.

It’s been suggested in the past that engineering students should try and clean up their act and start acting more professional. The idea that we are somehow degrading the profession by hosting over the top social events is a constant hum whispered to us from faculty members. The idea that being human and being allowed to find our own way somehow makes us less of an engineer has made its way into the academic consciousness. Even some students have voiced their opinion that engineering students and student groups should focus on only what’s presented in the course outline. This is absolutely absurd. The environment that the CFES and groups like it provide to its members is incredibly valuable. An environment where ideas are free and you can learn from your peers and spread your wings. Groups like this provide a feeling of belonging, fellowship and the reassurance that you are not alone. With the world fast becoming totally dependent on technology, students in engineering, science and technology are becoming the gate keepers of civilization. The luxuries we enjoy are impossible without technology and those who understand it, maintain it and imagine to ways to use it. These people are fast becoming society’s most valuable citizens. The modern engineer needs to have a voice in the public discourse. The issues at the forefront of political debate are entangled in years of scientific research and require technical expertise to solve. If we never let our engineers live, how can we expect them to lead? Professionals, by definition are guardians of a body of knowledge.

Professionals hold high knowledge, and we look to them for advice, for they know more than the unprofessional. Priests were the first professionals, made so by their vows and sacred knowledge. As engineers, we are tasked with maintaining our civilization, as priests are tasked with maintaining the soul. It takes people with specialized knowledge to do the things we do. We are tasked with doing what the previous generation thought impossible. We are charged with the safety of society, because we are the ones who understand the dangers. We need to be able to talk honestly about issues and problems. We need to expose our students to environments where they won’t be punished for trying new things. We need to foster creativity. When you are creative in academia you get a failing grade; so student groups have taken the task unto themselves.

Next time you see a group of engineers with beers in hand or scheming some elaborate prank, please reserve your judgment. These activities are run so we can blow off some steam. We need to make mistakes, we need to learn firsthand. We need to do things our way and learn our own methods. We need way to foster our imaginations. The world can’t afford mistakes at this stage in the game, we understand this. As the youth inheriting new ecological, financial, energy and humanitarian emergencies daily, we understand better then you do. We understand that we can no longer sit in front of a computer and ignore the world. We need to go out at live the world and that’s exactly what we are doing.
May this tubes be a guiding light this week for those of you who cannot yet see the light at the end of the tunnel that is this week. I leave you with these six pages as I take my leave to move to another country where I will not have to pay outrageous amounts of coin for surpluses on my internet use. To the third years out there, I leave you with this simple advice: Disorientation. Tommorow. You’ll regret missing out.

Signing off, Brandon Nikolaisen

---

**Super Sudoku**

Four people need to cross a rickety rope bridge to get back to their camp at night. Unfortunately, they only have one flashlight and it only has enough light left for seventeen minutes. The bridge is too dangerous to cross without a flashlight, and it's only strong enough to support two people at any given time.

Each of the campers walks at a different speed. One can cross the bridge in 1 minute, another in 2 minutes, the third in 5 minutes, and the slow-poke takes 10 minutes to cross. How do the campers make it across in 17 minutes?

Send answers to essb-com@engwr.uvic.ca. Correct or creative solutions may be published in the next edition of Tubes and Wires.

---

**Brain Buster**

The ESS is getting stickers made for our future engineering outings, but we want your input first! Send your sticker designs or ideas to taylorentz@gmail.com. Sticker designs cannot be associated with alcohol, year or stream.

---

**Answer to Last Weeks Puzzle:**

(Where did the missing dollar go?)

- $25 went to the room fee.
- $2 went to the bellboy.
- $3 went back to the dudes. These add to $30.

The “actually spent $27” comment is irrelevant, there is no other dollar.

-P. Cousineau

---

The hourglass is the timepiece with the most moving pieces.

-S. Sermo

---

**Contributors:**

Brandon Nikolaisen
Eric Kyfiuk
Nigel Syrotuck

Mike Anderson
Faisal Hamood
Julian Grove

Ryan Petty

---

**Editor’s Quip**

May this tubes be a guiding light this week for those of you who cannot yet see the light at the end of the tunnel that is this week. I leave you with these six pages as I take my leave to move to another country where I will not have to pay outrageous amounts of coin for surpluses on my internet use. To the third years out there, I leave you with this simple advice: Disorientation. Tommorow. You’ll regret missing out.

Signing off, Brandon Nikolaisen