



STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS

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SEAOI ACKNOWLEDGES EFFORTS OF FUTURE ENGINEERS AT 2011 STATE SCIENCE FAIR

Chicago: Representatives from SEAIOI attended the Illinois State Science Fair to judge and award the efforts of the next generation of structural engineers. The state wide educational competition is sponsored by the Illinois Junior Academy of Science (www.ijas.org) and brings together over 1000 of the top science projects prepared by students in seventh and eighth grade (junior division) and high school level (senior division), hosted at the Assembly Hall on the University of Illinois campus in Champaign-Urbana.

Selection of the top projects began at the school level with students competing against their classmates. The winners of the school competition advanced to the regional level where they competed against the top students from other schools. The winners of the regional competition met for the final round of state competition on May 7, 2011.

Christopher DiPalma and Lauren DiPalma represented SEAIOI in judging projects in the Engineering category. On behalf of the Board of Directors and all members of SEAIOI, they presented a Certificate of Outstanding Achievement and a \$100 gift card to the top project entered in the category. In addition, three other students were awarded certificates of Honorable Mention and \$50 gift cards for their projects. SEAIOI supports and encourages these young students to continue their interest in structural engineering through the presentation of these awards and acknowledgment of the effort they put forth.

At this year's science fair, approximately 20 projects related to structural engineering were judged. Among these projects, many focused on constructing and testing bridge designs to determine the most efficient with respect to weight supported versus bridge mass. Other projects judged included column shape efficiency, testing wood joint configurations, and foundation material strengths.

SEAIOI presented the Outstanding Achievement award to Erin Monforti, a seventh grade student at St. Cornelius School in Chicago, Illinois, for her project titled "London Bridge is Staying Up". Erin tested several truss configurations, which she named O, I, T, and V based on the cross section shape. Not surprisingly, O and I were the most efficient, which Erin attributed to the presence of both a top and bottom deck. Although in the junior division, Erin showed a deeper understanding of the material and behavior than many of the high school students competing in the senior division.

Honorable Mention awards went to the following students:

- Leonard Brahin from Ogden International School in Chicago, Illinois for "In Truss We Trust"
- Gregor Wettermann from WR Sundling School in Palatine, Illinois for "Crushing Structures with Different Support Designs"
- Mathew Mah from St. Francis Xavier School in Wilmette, Illinois for "Which Wood Joint Withstands the Most Stress"

SEAIOI is committed to serving the structural engineers of today and inspiring the engineers of tomorrow. Our sincere congratulations to all students everywhere who worked to develop projects to test and investigate aspects of structural engineering. The future belongs to these young inventors and innovators, and to their spirit of discovery.

Submitted By: Lauren DiPalma – Young Engineer Committee Chair

For SEAIOI News visit the website <http://www.seaoi.org>.

Editors: Pictures of students/projects available from the SEAIOI office

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