

JANUARY 1998 ISSUE OF THE DPRG NEWSLETTER



Check out the crowd at the meeting!!

Our slate of 1998-1999 officers has been chosen! Elections were held at the January meeting and the following people were installed in office:

- President - Jim Brown (that was a surprise, wasn't it?)
- Vice President - Clay Timmons (a job he's been assuming all along anyway!)
- Secretary/Treasurer - Larry Kerns (who?)
- Hardware/Software Librarian - Kevin Carter (good luck on locating everything!)
- Books Librarian - Eric Yundt (Arms like tree trunks from his monthly workouts carrying the books)
- Electronic Parts Librarian - Roger Arrick (do we have electronic parts?)
- Contest Committee - Jim Brown (chair), Eric Yundt, Clay Timmons (now I know who to blame when I don't win!)

Good luck to all the new officers at the beginning of another challenging and successful year!!

The Prez Sez

I'm excited to be president for another year, and I thank everyone for voting me in for a second term. I'm hoping that this year will be even better than ever, and I'm looking forward to all of the really cool things our group will be doing this year.

On the plate so far are a Contest and a Library display case in March, a Presentation by the UTA Aerial Robotics Group project manager in May, and another Contest and the Pepsi Kid-a-Round event in September. No doubt there will be other events throughout the year as well.

I'm really glad to be here and I'm hoping that we can continue to enjoy DPRG together as we have in the past and really do some cool and fun things. Hey, if it ain't having fun then why would we wanna do it. I'm having a blast, and I hope everyone else just jumps right in and we'll all have a good time.

I'm so glad to be a part of DPRG and I hope each of you are too. I can't believe the fantastic opportunity each of us has to collaborate and learn from each other and share great ideas with one another.

If you're missing the RBNO meetings, you're missing a valuable part of being a DPRG member. I'm glad there are so many easy to get along with guys that are so forthcoming with excellent robotic information and ideas and even listen to all my wacky ideas. These valuable resources we have just among ourselves is worth a fortune. With all of the incredible talent and knowledge we have in our group it's for certain that membership in the DPRG is well worth it.

I invite everyone to join in on the fun, you'll be glad you did, and the more there is, the better it gets.

-- Jim Brown

We're on a roll!

Submitted by Clay Timmons

1997 was an incredible year for the Dallas Personal Robotics Group. The club's growth and activity increased so much it was like a renaissance. To recap the years highlights:

- Proposed and discussed club mission statement
- Filed for assumed name
- Worked on paperwork for 501c, not for profit organization
- Mailing list, a huge success with over ??? subscribers
- Web page
- Purchased CUPL software

- Designed and sold club T-shirts
- Hosted several guest speakers
- Greatly increased membership using postcard mailings and flyers
- Increased attendance with meetings. 50+ people at May contest
- Received donations:
 - 3 Kiel 8051 C-compilers
 - EPROM emulators and 8051 boards from Tech Tools
 - CD ROMS from NCC
 - Motorized wheelchair from anonymous source
 - Numerous databooks and catalogs
- Started GARP the Group Autonomus Robot Project
- Published 10 Newsletters
- Hosted first robotics contest in over 7? years with 10? participants
- Created professionally made video of DPRG contest- Ed Rivers
- Built portable/reusable walls for hosting contests- Eric Yundt
- Appointed contest committe- Jim Brown, Clay Timmons, Eric Yundt
- Refined rules for Quick Trip and T-time contests
- Invented and hosted several RBNOs (Robot Builders Night Out)
- Held first ever swap meet

Probably a few others that have escaped my memory

Quite an impressive list! Special thanks are in order to Jim Brown, the club's President, and all club members who helped make DPRG the active club it is today. We're on a roll, keep the momentum going!

January Show & Tell (Click on images to see them full-size) Several members brought their bots to show them off and to share their solutions to various technical problems associated with navigation, torque control, software and construction details.



DAVID P. ANDERSON

David's robot (as yet unnamed) is a very impressive little guy capable of independent navigation from any point and back to the exact same spot over a predefined course while avoiding obstacles and making the necessary course corrections at the same time. His system uses the MIT 6.270 board and a wide array of bump sensors, IR sensors, sonar, wheel counters, light and motion detectors.



JIM BROWN

Jim brought his latest creation "Darth" so named because of a mask of the Star Wars character "Darth Vader" that is normally mounted to the vehicle. Jim did so to entertain his baby daughter while working on the bot. Jim plans to enter Darth in the upcoming March RoboRama along with one or possibly two other bots. As you know, RoboRama is the DPRG's robotics contest held twice a year.



ED KOFFMAN

Ed brought a line-following robot he had built and explained its operation. He also brought his latest project which is a bit unusual in that the robot uses a plastic milk crate for a body shell. Ed felt that the crate provided a perfect container with room for several layers of electronics while at the same time providing protection and also allowing adequate air flow around components. He claims the bot will be capable of carrying a fairly heavy load which will make conservation of weight a less important factor in the bot's design. Good luck on the concept, Ed!!



RON WEISS

Ron brought his bot for show and tell, a creation that uses modified RC servos as drive motors. Ron came with his father and is probably the youngest member to demonstrate his creation yet.



BLAINE LEE

Blaine was kind enough to show his built-from-scratch robot. The robot uses modified servos for the main drive components. The brains of the outfit is a BOTBOARD II controller sold by Marvin Greene of the Seattle Robotics Society.



THE OU GUY

The OU guy is someone who showed up from the University of Oklahoma with a robot that he created for a specialized contest task. The purpose of the contest was to turn off a "switch" on the opposing robot's top surface. To accomplish this he had constructed a long boom made out of thin gauge aluminum. The boom was shaped into a "trough" or upside-down half-pipe. The object was to swing the boom horizontally over the opponent's robot and have the boom roll over the switch. He reports that the concept was very effective.