INVENTIVE MINDS

Innovators ignite a passion for science

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LEADER-POST

With motors whirring and obots beeping, the Sas- atchewan Science Centre vas a hub of innovation- inded activity during the rst ever Ignite! Festival.

"Science isn't something iat just happens in a class- oom," said Ryan Holota, ie science centre's direc- or of business development nd visitor services.

"It's a celebration of mak- ig."

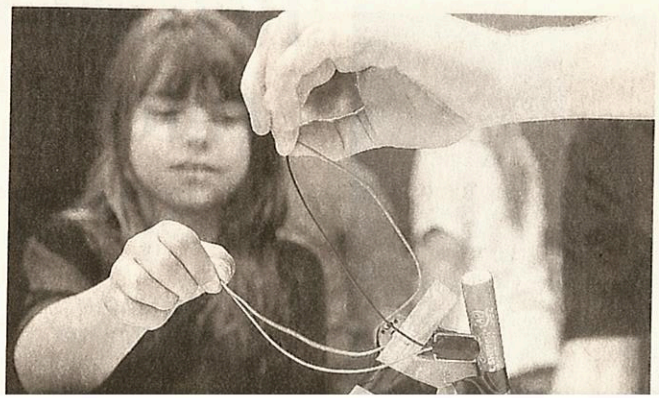
Holota said the science ntre looked out to the com- unity to find people using ience and technology in teresting ways.

The exhibitors came back ith ideas from using Lego r art, to centuries-old cam- a obscura technology, to printers and many things between.

"We thought that this ent would be a great way ignite scientific creativ- and innovation, and to t people thinking about w they can use science their everyday life," he ded.

Below are descriptions of e exhibitors' work.

The Ignite! Festival con- ues today at the Saskatch- an Science Centre.



David Martin, R2-D2 builder

David Martin completed light was a working steam engine and threshing machine chugging away at one end of a table.

"They're all scratch-built out of whatever I can lay my hands on," said Moulding, a longtime model maker who started off with Meccano sets.

While the technology itself may not be new, advancements in small motors make it easier to run the tiny machines.

What does he hope visitors will take away from his exhibit?

"You can do anything you put your mind to," Moulding said.

Gerald Saul, Camera obscura

Ducking under a dark cloth, visitors can just make out the reflected image of Gerald Saul as he sits under a bright light a few feet away.

The hand-built camera obscura has a hole on one side, where light passes through. Light from the scene hits a mirror and is reproduced, with colour intact.

"These date back perhaps thousands of years," Saul said. "Camera obscura means dark room."

It's not a new technology, but re-introducing the basics of optics to visitors is just as rewarding.

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David Martin, R2-D2 builder

avid Martin completed exact replica of Star s' beloved R2-D2 just un- a year ago and has been ing with the robot ever e.

t Winnipeg's Central ada Comic Con, or C4, tin and his bot were rmed by fans.

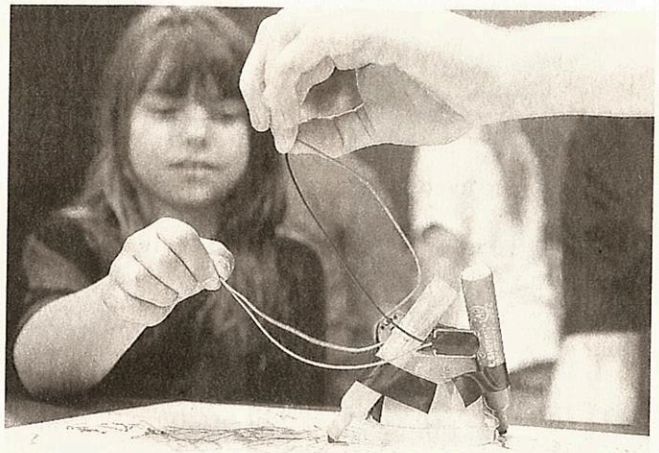
artin, who farms near katoon, said he built over a two-year period und farming season.

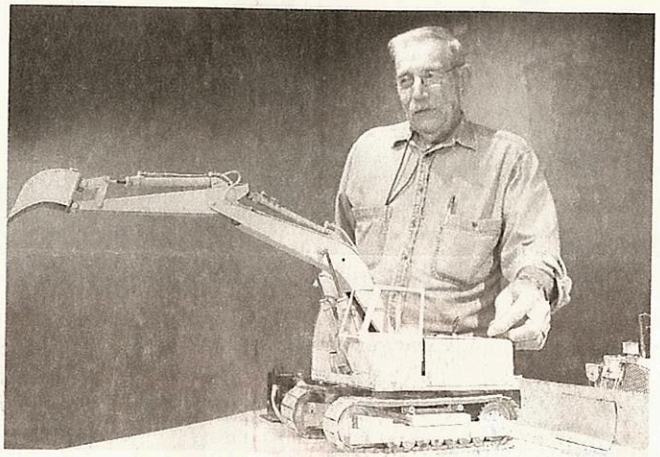
was a bit of a group ef- to build the bot, Martin d, with the members of nternational R2 Build- Club chipping in their rtise when needed.

good are the builders e club that it has been missioned by George as to make one for the movie, Martin said.

applied, but the Sas- hewan-based droid — irst made in the prov- — would be too far from Martin, in case thing malfunctioned.

teaches you basic elec- ics, but basically it's un," Martin said. "Kids think it's real. 'How's he controlling it?' "





PHOTOS: DON HEALY/Leader-Post

Clockwise from top: Rick Martens holds a nerf gun made from a 3D printer, Gerald Saul works with Camera Obscura, Dick Moulding works with scratch-built models, the trio of Mike Schlosser, left, David Martin and Chad Wood are R2-D2 builders and ScribbleBots capture Alexyn Ward's attention at the Ignite! Festival at the Saskatchewan Science Centre on Friday.

Rick Martens, 3D printer

From steampunk-styled Nerf guns to Lego bricks made from a 3D printer, Rick Martens was ready to show what could soon be commonplace.

"3D printers is sort of the future, I think," said Martens, who was representing Crash Bang Labs. "They're starting to get in schools, the libraries are getting some."

While most designs are downloaded, Martens modelled some himself, including a tiny Etch a Sketch and a stickman figurine.

As technologies advance, 3D printers like the ones he had on display could even become old-fashioned someday, he said.

Dick Moulding, Model maker

A wide array of bright yellow model farm and road equipment was spread across Dick Moulding's exhibition table, but the high-

away.

The hand-built camera obscura has a hole on one side, where light passes through. Light from the scene hits a mirror and is reproduced, with colour intact.

"These date back perhaps thousands of years," Saul said. "Camera obscura means dark room."

It's not a new technology, but re-introducing the basics of optics to visitors is just as rewarding.

"All new technology is based on old technology," Saul said. "It's not as showy as R2-D2, but it's a bit of a surprise. It's this fusion of art and science and people can appreciate it on a very humanistic level."

Casey Sakires, ScribbleBots

There's a pink pen scribbling furiously on a sheet of paper, but no one is holding the end.

"It's basically creating a picture using an offset motor," Casey Sakires, a science educator at the Saskatchewan Science Centre said. "It's the same motor that makes your cellphone vibrate."

The basic premise is to allow anyone to be creative and use a little bit of electrical know-how at the same time, he added.

"They learn that science can be combined with many things. When some people think of science, they may not make the artistic connection," Sakires said.

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